

Literature and Media Culture

According to our approach, media culture is not a 20th century phenomenon, it has its roots in the mid-19th century: the press and the literature began to circulate narratives that are based on details understood as a sign of the world and a sign of the narrative. It is this logic that can be identified in Balzac or Sue's novels and this is also the manifestation of a new paradigm, that of representation: the author is considered to be a mediator, a producer of a narrative about the world. Literature is not independent of the media system, on the contrary it is marked by it.

In this context, literature can be considered as a particularly elaborated communication system and its evolution depends on that of other systems. Literature develops and disseminates representations, exists in concrete forms (press, manuscript, book, etc.) and the analysis of a narrative can't neglect considerations of the material conditions of the publication. The emphasis is less on the author than on the mediation processes, the (trans)media relations or the migration of a story between different media. From this perspective, literature can be considered to be a set of practices, both individual and collective; it would also be interesting to examine the authors' media poetics, their relationship with the media system of their time.

The analyses in the five parts of this book are guided by these theoretical considerations. In the first part, attention is drawn to the notion and different periods of media culture: on the one hand, a study is dedicated to the early manifestations of this cultural logic in Hungary between 1840 and 1920; on the other hand, an introduction is given to the sociological work of Edgar Morin, who is very little known in Hungary. Although we are interested in different cultures and periods in these two studies, the reader can find points in common between them.

The second part focuses on the Hungarian variant of a novelistic genre, one of the first manifestations of the new cultural logic, the urban mystery. The first adaptations

appeared in the 1840s, by Ignác Nagy and Lajos Kuthy; later, in 1873, when Sue's novel was published in Hungarian by three publishing houses simultaneously, József Kiss published, in turn, under a pseudonym, his own mysteries. The genre was practiced until the 1930s.

The studies in the next two sections focus on the crime novel. On the one hand, we analyze the process of institutionalization of the genre in Hungary, especially its difficulties due to political and cultural upheavals; on the other hand, we are interested in particular oeuvres, including novels of Soma Gúthi, Louis Lucien Rogger, Jenő Rejtő and the crime novel series of a contemporary author, Vilmos Kondor.

The fifth and last part of the book is dedicated to book reviews. These brief articles can be regarded as dialogues with colleagues about their works, which allowed us at the same time to systematize our media approach to literature.