

## SUMMARY

### *The Genealogy of Home Movies.*

#### *Transylvanian Amateur Media Practices from Photography to New Media*

Private film makers continue the line of the ancient cultural activity of observation, recording and contemplation: „*home movies*, also known as *amateur films* or *private films* are the continuation of the tradition of the bourgeois family portrait gallery, in former times painted, and from the last century recorded on photographs” (Forgács 1995. 109–111). The quote condenses the approach of this book. Péter Forgács in his essayistic writing formulates the idea, which had become the cornerstone of contemporary theories of media practices and media culture: new media build on older ones, that is to say, they function as a kind of media history archive and carry in themselves their own genealogy. In this conceptual framework picture usage at the beginning of the 20th century is connected to picture usage at the beginning of the 21st century: since the superimposition of media is not a new phenomenon, it offers a theoretical framework in which picture-making practices that are far from each other in time can be interpreted in their historicity. However, the term *private film* or *home movie*, gradually becoming out-dated, draws attention on the changing demands of media users towards pictures in the new media age, and the changing social conventions of media practices.

The first chapters of the book provide an overview of contemporary approaches to the historicity of media. By mapping out the different approaches, methodological aims are defined. Media genealogy has elaborated an interpretative model for grasping the processes of media history. The genealogy of the increasingly familiar (home) movie can also be relevant in theorizing the dissemination and the chameleon-like aspect of media. The theory of remediation also models the interdependence of media within the framework of communication theory. Remediation can be relevant from the viewpoint of home movies/videos especially when it reflects on the relation between media and reality: all mediation is real (not a simulation) and the end-products are real as artifacts. We can also examine remediation as a social phenomenon with historically changing aspects (see media genealogy). A medium can mediate not only images and other media, but – as a part of reality – it also mediates certain norms and decisions made and written into its material by other people. If we focus on the meanings of the moving image within the space and reality of home, the domestication of objects and technologies can also be relevant. The researchers of media domestication study the way in which different information and communication technologies become part of households: why family members choose a certain technology, how they harmonize it with their everyday environment and habits

and what kind of power structures, task distributions and rites appear as a consequence. Looking at the various research directions presented above this analysis considers media genealogy to be a theoretical framework which can hold together the collected data and films. Domestication, remediation, intermediality are concepts and at the same time media historical and social perspectives which can further refine the reflection on the practice of home movie making.

The theoretical conclusions are followed by the in-depth analysis of three Transylvanian home movie collections from the following perspectives: the genealogy of the family and family life, the media practices of the family, the content and the structural, formal aspects of the collections and the habits of preserving them. This segment results in a chronological series of data from which the specific historical periods can be unfolded together with the analysis of technology – family – everyday life – home movie/video. In this case the focus is on the practice of the respective family embedded into the context of everyday life. It is examined the way in which technologies of film-making became part of and structured a community's life (both in a physical and metaphorical sense) in a given period. What kind of identities did families construct for the media they used, what sort of media practices characterized their everyday life in a given period of social history? How did home movies/videos connect people in the process of making, watching and archiving them?

In the films we can decipher the stories and the periods of paying attention to each other, as well as the scenes of familial life. To put it more concretely: we can follow the story of the father observing his children (in a further research one could examine how this turns into the story of the observing mother). More rarely the lens of the camera is directed towards the generation of the film-maker's parents. It seems that children represent a different social order, and for this reason they are regarded as photographic and filmic themes in different periods. At the same time we can witness how film-making becomes part of parental duties and how the recording of childhood becomes a social requirement.

Media are objects and consolidated human relations at the same time. Consequently, the home movie/video can be not only a film but also an object, it can mirror the symbiosis with media technologies, it can connect the intimate sphere and the formal frameworks of our everyday life and it can be about friendship, motherhood, fatherhood, community life and genealogies.