

# Media Culture in Central and Eastern Europe

French literary history has long been engaged in the research of the so-called popular literature's works, its well- or lesser-known authors. However, the legitimation process of this research area was far from self-evident. Charles Grivel's landmark work from 1973 was concerned with the caption and sustention of readers' attention and analyzed book-format novels published between 1870 and 1880 in Paris, selecting a sample of 200 from a corpus about 3 thousand volumes regardless of the popular or elite framing of the texts. A few years later the literary historians of the University of Limoges published their pioneer works: Ellen Constans, who was an active member of the French Communist Party, was interested in sentimental novels, Jean-Claude Vareille respectively in the aesthetics of the popular novel. It is important to mention those specialists from Belgium and Quebec (Jacques Dubois, Marc Lits, Paul Bleton, Julia Bettinotti) whose academic situation is peripheral compared to the French literary system, and whose works were a proactive force – perhaps precisely because of that position.

After a while it became clear that we should not speak about literary texts without, on the one hand, understanding the cultural and economic context in which they were born and experienced, and on the other hand, following up the adaptations of the written media texts or of those hybrid works of art based on various codes of mixing (comics, photo novels, film novels ...). The result of that perspective was a reflection on the media culture and its characteristics represented by the works of Marc Lits, Jacques Migozzi, Dominique Kalifa.

The researchers, coming from different horizons, began to co-operate in more and more organized forms and an important phase of this process was May 2011 when at the University of Limoges the LPCM, the *Associations des Chercheurs en Littératures Populaires et Cultures Médiaquies* was established. The LPCM attempts to integrate the

scientific approaches dealing with Eastern European media culture phenomena beside the Western European one.

All this information is necessary for the reader holding this volume to understand the context of those studies. In December 2014 with the organization and financial support of the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the University of Debrecen, the Queen's University of Belfast and the University of Limoges, a conference was held at the University of Debrecen, where the speakers tried to point out what similarities and differences can be grasped between the processes of Eastern and Western European media culture. The studies issued from those lectures will be published later in English or French and for this edition the organizers selected those few texts having either Hungarian or Eastern European implications.

Jacques Migozzi's study may be interesting to the reader partly because he points out how the French researches in this field evolved, and secondly because he reveals what shift is produced in the scientific perspective if we take into consideration both the Eastern and the Western European case.

The main concern of the study of Sándor Kálai is what kind of economic and socio-cultural context defines the evolution of the Hungarian media culture compared to the Western European situation. He also tries to clarify what the implications of the concept of media culture are in contrast with the often-used term of mass culture.

Lampros Flitouris's and Christos Dermentzopoulos's study summarizes an on-going research that examines the social changes of South-East-Europe through the perspective of the emergence of its national cultures, whilst taking account of the way in which the mass cultural practices appear in the countries of the region (Greece, Turkey, Albania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria). In the Balkan countries we can talk about mass culture only after the war, in particular in the context of the social transformation of the 1950s and 1960s.

The starting point of Vilmos Keszeg's study is the problem of which place can be assigned to popular and folk culture and how they intersect. To answer this question he points out several problems. On the one hand he reconstructs the long process by

which scientific research discovered Hungarian folk culture and identified its various functions, and how later the theory of folklorism and of the heritage standardized and revitalized this tradition. On the other hand, he analyses how the various media are domesticated in everyday life creating a new kind of folk (popular) culture. Thirdly, we get an answer to the question whether the communist state did or did not have a specific popular culture.

Hanna Orsolya Vincze analyses Eötvös József's monumental work *The Influence of the Main Ideals of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century on the State* through the lenses of the history of ideas. She points out that, according to Eötvös, first of all we have to understand how the people themselves interpret popular ideals. Popularity, in this approach, had three components: ideas around which people rallied, emotions that connected them to these ideas, and actions people undertook in their name. The way towards understanding these components was to understand the culture of the people in its various manifestations, from popular religiosity to literary and material culture. By re-reading Eötvös's work focusing on his conception of popular ideas, this paper investigates how the longstanding tension between popularity and the distrust in populism was articulated in a classic of nineteenth century central European political thought.

The press was undoubtedly the catalyst of popular literature and an important tool of its distribution. The popular press appears in Vienna only in the 1850s. Those journals published serial novels, local and heteronomous, adventure or thesis novels that are sharply different from the international and autonomous literature published in the so-called "quality" newspapers. Norbert Bachleitner's study compares their thematic and stylistic differences based on two examples.

Marcela Poučová's research based on the Czech Republic's National Library's collections presents who are the most frequently read and translated French authors and novels in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in the Czech areas, willing to answer the question which was the a role of the translations in the Czech cultural field.

Anna Keszeg's study focuses on the visual aspects of media culture, analysing the attractions and the landscape of Hungarian cities at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Summarizing the researches about the economic, social and urban evolution of Hungarian cities in this period and the history of the popular attractions and of the visual culture, she presents the visual evolution of eleven Hungarian cities using epochal postcards as sources.