

## SUMMARY

The subject of the analysis is the written popular culture (literacy) of a settlement on the banks of the Maros (Sáromberke) river. It analyses how writing, as a practice, technique and cultural phenomenon both organizes and shapes the collective and individual world of a local community. How do different families connect to each other, to different institutions and changing relations via writing? Beyond the differentiation of certain text types, their pertinent roles and temporal models, I am interested in analyzing writing as an act and as a text-object, its appropriate moments as well as its related the habits.

The first chapter includes the subject of the dissertation and the structure of the paper as well as general observations regarding popular literacy which is the basis of the work. The questions that run in the background of the research are: what are the communication acts that a community would transact in writing as opposed to communicating them orally and how does this difference affect the local use of writing? How common is the production and usage of local files and writings? What is its relation with the changes in the social and economical space? What functions does writing have in the everyday life of the local community? What kind of writing habits does it form and what types of rituals relate to it? What kind of writer roles materialize in the habitat of the settlement? How do they change in time? Through what type of selectivity principle does the individual assumes the role of „writing-specialist” in a community? Or, on the contrary: how is this role imposed upon an individual by the community? How does this status restructure the individual’s life and relations? What objects and symbolical representations refer to these roles? Are these roles inheritable and how? How do inherited texts get built into the individual’s life-writing? What kind of secondary functions do written texts gain by their preservation, tradition, inheritance, continuous usage and reinterpretation? Lastly: how does writing become common?

The second chapter presents the timeframe, the sources and the exploration methods, the process of exploration and its recording. It discusses the preparation and processing of the research, the collecting techniques used, but also the sources and the applied theories regarding the analysis of information and interpretations.

Writing and living with writing is not an act secluded from the social, economic and cultural life. Even someone writing a journal in his room’s privacy is a socially embedded act defined by his surrounding micro and macro-context but also reflective to it. Thus the next chapter of the analysis aims to present this larger context. Its goal is to point out that the changes in economic structure, institutionalization, literacy and modernization on a local level, strongly affects the production of writings and the intensity of writing usage. Besides, some individuals in the community were assigned with the role of writer, others were forced to resort to the services of one.

The fourth chapter analyses the collective and the public uses of writing. In the premises of different settlements many types of writings can be used. Their analysis however meets some difficulties. The texts appearing in the public space get replaced or are eroded quickly. For this reason, instead of a general analysis of public signs, I restricted my interpretation on a few phenomena. First of all I paid attention to written contents of sacred and profane authorities and their related functions. Writings in public spaces reveal the dual nature of writing. On one hand they reveal the communication strategies of the authority and on the other they signify that writing tends to grow out of check and becomes uncontrollable. Private ideologies invade the spaces controlled by mundane and spiritual authorities, commemorate themselves, publish alternative knowledge and ideologies, contradict and antagonize; attack and undermine official decisions and ideologies on their own ground. Or individuals make their own representations and slink it in publicity.

The fifth chapter is the central part of the analysis; it consists in the assessment and analysis of three peasants' archives. During the research I have reviewed and inventoried all the texts from these three archives. The analysis of the three archives includes the presentation of certain habitats, the annual distribution of written documents, their repartition by genre, language and date of creation, functions and habits of safe-keeping. The analysis of the three Sáromberke peasant archive shows that the written documents have a system in which the official institution issuing them is linked to the common writings from the private sphere. The two types of writings appear in the same context and are fulfilling complementary roles. The analysis of the archive structure shows different consumer habits. The aggregation of private and official written documents, the different proportion between them and the differences in the intensity of usage is the outcome of this. The usage of official writings does not just mean safe-keeping or discarding but also conformity or non-conformism: mostly the involuntary imbueing of official clichés and phrases and the use of them in private, common writings. Private administrations make imitative use of official lingos and contexts necessary. Archives preserve the timescale of authorities instead of that of the family or the person. My goal with the analysis of the archives was to record and show the extended-time processes.

Certain subsections of chapter six discuss writings that were related to a specific event and illustrated habits and contexts of using those writings. They are case-studies that present writing functions that developed in different contexts and related habits.

1. The analysis of the Second World War' letters proves that a letter is not merely an instrument of relation-keeping that bridges spatial distances, but also has an economical (partially normative) and a psycho-sociological function. It serves as a reproduction agent of privacy. At the same time, due to inheritance, it is also a historical document becoming its narrative representation. Its safe-keeping and reading is motivated and shaped by the relation to the past of the family and of the community. The life on the war front is a specific life and letter-writing is its cultural product.

2. Memorial poems actually show the workings of the connective structure holding groups and societies together, how a group collects and communicates their own thoughts.

For this reason I have identified the memorial poem as the product of a group culture (counter-culture). For its users it is a connective structure that has tying and committing effect on two levels: on a social and on a temporal dimension. It ties people together by defining a common practical and active ground which, by its own binding force, gains trust and orients, making separate individuals become „us”, based on common rules and values. The memorial booklet spreads the communicative situation via writing. It feeds the tradition and communication.

3. An intruder writer can be defined as a casual writer whose poems play a larger role in public life. These poems are commissioned, condition that defines their size, content and style. They are meant to be published without exposing their writer. The texts are often copied and brought up to date without their writer's knowledge. Thus there is a special relationship between these texts, their writers and the community: the community knows and keeps count of these casual poets and their activity but their writings are not identifiable in the context of the discourse. Via popular poets, poem writing and the pseudo-anonymous types of poems perpetuate within the community.

4. The authors of popular autobiographies use different strategies in recording them, thus their publicity and the way facts are recorded also differ. The texts are known by the family in a direct way by reading them, by acquaintances in an indirect way through dialogues. The larger community however has little knowledge about these texts. The autobiographies of Sáromberke include the memories from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the era after collectivization is referred to in only a few sentences even if the narration stops much later chronologically. The greater part of the texts is devoted to the events of the two World Wars. They also linger over personal insults which are among the motivations for writing autobiographies.

5. While writing about the local traditions, the local specialist of regional history validates more than one of the writer's attitudes: he is at the same time autonomous author, copier, translator and informant. The different locutions present in his work are the result of the lacking a narrative scheme that is suitable to approach the historical past. In the text-creating activity of the writer we can distinguish the following models: the sermon, the chronicle, the memoir, the novel and the informative-educative literature. His writings are not mere documentaries about the events from the settlement but also the mind-set of a Sáromberke inhabitant about their community, themselves, and their obligation towards the community.

The seventh chapter reviews the functions of writing usage and the written texts from the settlement's habitat. It presents the magical, the ritual, the commemorative, the economic, the literary, the aesthetical and the decorative functions of writing. Depending on the context used it identifies primary and secondary functions.

Chapter eight encompasses the conclusions. My analysis' most important conclusions synthesize the functions, the contexts, the habits, the production and the distribution of documents, but also the relation between writing and orality or the problem of bequeathing. Finally, the conclusions show the *power of writing*. The analysed processes equally indicate

the power and uncontrollability of writing. With the spreading of literacy writing stops being institution-controlled; it grabs functions, forms habits, occupies situations, produces specialists and so on; in brief: produces its own culture. Notwithstanding individual intentions, in many cases despite of them, written text steps out of its primary context and lives a life of its own.

The volume has a DVD appendix, which includes: a selection from the documents in the three archives; old family photographs; photos taken in field research and maps related.

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