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## Introduction: Cultures and Cultural Researches

### The Metamorphosis of Folk Tradition: Organic and Organised Tradition

#### What is Organic Folk Culture?

Ethnological research began across Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following the geographical discoveries, interest for society significantly increased. As the discovery of the world was completed, this drifted into a crisis. This is when the discovery of “our primitives” took place. The discovery of the European peasantry and its culture can be traced back to different – political, aesthetic, and sociological – reasons. Researches were essentially motivated by two goals: creating the unity of society and revealing the different registers of national culture (Burke 1991: 17–38). The development of research interest for contemporary society (of statistical science) was described by the research group of Pierre Nora (Le Bras 1986, Nora 1986).

Two intentions separate themselves from each other in this process: on the one hand, interest is born for the folk and the individual, and the methodology for research on society is formed; on the other hand, distance to the folk is created, an outside perspective is formed for looking at the folk, and the existence of cultural differences also becomes conscious. The preoccupation of intellectuals with ethnic culture and the critical interpretation of ethnographic researches generated lively interest and vehement debates within Hungarian ethnology (anthropology). A series of objections were raised against ethnographic researches, such as the fact that they followed selective criteria, aesthetic and archaic elements were favoured, and archiving was done randomly or tendentiously (Burke 1991: 32–38, Niedermüller 1990, 1994).

**Historical approach.** After the settlement of Hungarians in Europe, the Hungarian aristocracy and peasantry (the serfs) followed divergent ways of life, and their social contacts and participation in the life of the country were also different. The separation of folk and elite cultures in Hungarian society took place during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, creating a departure between little and great tradition. (The European process was described by P. Burke and M. Bakhtin: Burke 1991: 39–45, Bakhtin 1982). Ever since then, the elite class of society has increasingly followed a cultural model conveyed by education, which facilitated access to and integration into European cultural and scientific life. The departure from folk culture

took place on several levels. The first level is, of course, the participation in school education and thereby, as well as through books, the gaining of a different kind of knowledge about the world. In this same period, religion also turns against magic. Witch-hunting, which was in the focus of attention for a long time, compromised social practices such as fortune telling, magical practices directed at ensuring good luck and health, and agrarian magic; healing, jurisdiction, and social co-existence were reorganised within institutional frameworks. From then on, the shaping of one's life course based itself upon social statuses and roles. Integration into the Gutenberg galaxy became a basic form of spending one's leisure time.

This is the process through which the dichotomy between folk culture and popular culture was born within the cultural typology of European society. The Eastern European and the Western European cultural model were fundamentally different from each other. In states where the national elite joined the royal court, it created a culture with a national character (as in England and France), different from folk culture merely in its content but not in its spirit. In these countries, both the social elite and the large middle and lower class had a culture permeated by national spirit. Thus, the national cultural register structured itself here through the separation of the cultures of the few and of the many. However, where the aristocracy and the intellectual class oriented themselves toward Western culture (in their language use and cultural habits), the elite culture acquired a cosmopolitan (European) character, and the national spirit manifested itself merely in popular (folk) culture.<sup>1</sup> Thus, where the little tradition is not designated with the term "popular culture" but "folk culture" (*Volkskultur*), the difference in terminology stems not only from the different use of synonyms.

The first appeal to research Hungarian folk poetry was launched by Miklós Révai in the journal entitled *Magyar Hírmondó* [The Hungarian Messenger]. This heartening appeal mentioned French, English, Italian, and – as the fourth – German researches as examples. At that time, it was not yet clear that the exploration of the commoners' traditions will bring the national features of Hungarian culture to the surface. Hungarian ethnology also had to make a long way until discovering the folk. Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, naïve, idealising conceptions – originating from the German mentality, i.e. Herder, Goethe, and the Grimm brothers – were common about the people who created folk culture. These people were believed to live carelessly, work diligently, behave morally, sing enthusiastically while working and having a rest, tell tales, preserve the songs of the ancestors, while its songs and tales are shaped through spreading from mouth to mouth, and the individual does not seek to stand out and achieve immortality. The social discovery of the people (the peasantry) took place in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; (literary) sociography, with authors such as Gyula Illyés, József Darvas, Géza Féja, György Böződi, Ferenc Balázs, presented a nuanced image about the life of the village. Another characteristic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century discovery of popular culture is its selective nature. Since the first collectors of folklore were humanist intellectuals

1 The dichotomy is presented by Hofer 2009.



(philologists, aestheticians, novelists, priests), they primarily considered aesthetically more developed texts and objects as worthy of attention. Their researches have worked out a typology and a system for texts and objects, which was included into the register and the canon of national culture. Arnold Ipolyi wrote the first Hungarian mythology in 1854 following a foreign model. János Kriza published the first regional folklore repertory in 1863. Between 1872 and 1914, 14 volumes of the *Magyar Népköltési Gyűjtemény* [The Hungarian Folk Literature Collection] have appeared. The main aim of this collection was to professionally publish the folk texts of the Hungarian language area (folk tales, historical narratives, legends, folk ballads, folk songs, nursery rhymes, riddles, text recited while dancing, toasts held on special occasions, minstrel songs, letters in rhymes, folk customs). The *Új Magyar Népköltési Gyűjtemény* [The New Hungarian Folk Literature Collection] began to be published in 1940, and the new series of the *Magyar Népköltési Gyűjtemény* [The Hungarian Folk Poetry Collection] started in 1989. Meanwhile, folklore collections also started to be published in book volumes and journals.

The Ethnographic Museum was founded in 1872. Along with the objects of remote peoples, a large quantity of Hungarian objects has also been deposited here during the following decades. In 1896, the Millennium Exhibition was founded on the thousand-year anniversary of the Hungarian settlement. The millennial village was constructed for this exhibition, with 12 Hungarian and 12 non-Hungarian houses from Hungary, and 10 000 objects. An ethnographic museum also opened in 1923 in Kolozsvár.

Thus, the archives accumulated rich anthologies, and the museums gained a multitude of objects.

The discovery of Hungarian folk culture was followed by the writing of the cultural syntheses. Between 1907 and 1922 Dezső Malonyay published a monographic work in five volumes, entitled *A magyar nép díszítőművészete* [The Decorative Art of the Hungarian people]. The idea of the first synthesis belonged to Károly Viski. The first edition of the four-volume work was published between 1933 and 1937, the second and the third between 1941 and 1943, under the title *A magyarság néprajza* [The Ethnography of the Hungarians]. The first volume included a summary on diet, architecture and building types, furniture, crafts, and costumes. The second volume contained the description of livelihood models (gathering, fishing, hunting, animal husbandry, agriculture, load bearing, traffic, and signalling), ornamental art, and traditional objects. The third volume offered a synthesis on folk songs, epics, anecdotes, legends, tales, dramatic tradition, the style of folk poetry, and the dialects. The fourth volume presented a summary on music, dance, customs, beliefs, play, and folk religion.<sup>2</sup>

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2 For the sake of completeness, let us mention here that the synthesis based on the scientific approaches of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – that also contains the results of the fieldworks carried out during the first three quarters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – was published between 1988 and 2011 in eight volumes, under the title of *Magyar néprajz* [Hungarian Ethnography]. The five volumes of the *Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon* [Hungarian Ethnographic Lexicon] appeared between 1977 and 1982. The history of Hungarian ethnology was written by László Kósa in: Kósa 2001.

The communist period significantly stifled the research and knowledge of Hungarian folk culture. Progress took place in small steps. Some genres that were not researched before were discovered. The discovery of archaic folk prayers had the loudest echo. Zsuzsanna Erdélyi presented her prayer collection in 1970, which was followed by the publishing of the first collection. Through the years, due to great social cooperation, Zsuzsanna Erdélyi herself was able to enrich her collection, and other researchers from different regions of the Hungarian language area also followed in her footsteps. The discovery of archaic prayers brought along with itself the review of the entire system of sacred folklore (Erdélyi 1976). The investigations on the survival of oral genres led to the discovery of the *igaztörténet* (true story) genre, which began to substitute traditional narratives. One category of such stories presents personal experiences (*memorat*), while another one offers stories associated with well-known individuals (*fabulat*). The *igaztörténet* genre was described by Linda Dégh, Ilona Dobos, and Miklós Réthey Prikkel (Réthey Prikkel 1991). The discovery of memoir literature took place in the 1970s (Hoppál–Küllös 1972).

In Eastern Europe the history of folk (peasant) culture had a peculiar course. In Transylvania after the nationalisation (1948) and the collectivisation of the land (1962) the folk culture lost its importance gradually. Remnants of it survived almost to the present day in some isolated, slowly developing regions (such as at the Csángós from Moldavia and Ghimeş, and on the Transylvanian Plain), and in regions with strong cultural and community identity (Székely Land / Szeklerland, Kalotaszeg). In the first case, whole registers of culture have been conserved (mentality, folk religiousness, farming, ways of life, and communication), while in the second case traditions found a place within a changed cultural and social framework (e.g. rituals, occupations).

Hungarian ethnology has studied since its beginnings the traditions of the feudal peasant (agrarian) and the affluent artisan<sup>3</sup> society. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century an attempt was made to discover the culture of other social classes and groups. While the research on peasant culture took place in the framework of aesthetic criteria and a general concept of values, where traditional and ethnic character were emphasized, the research on industrial and urban worker culture followed criteria related to the history of ideology and to ways of life (Nagy 1987, R. Nagy 2010, Ilyés 2013). The 1989 regime change made possible the research on Transylvanian nobility and aristocracy; these researches followed criteria related mainly to the history of family and feudalism, and associated with the history of reception in the domains of politics and diplomacy. Hungarian ethnology has come late to the research on the subcultures of youth groups (Rác 1998, Szapu 2002, Jakab–Keszeg 2007).

In our interpretation, folk culture is not a cultural relic removed from use and randomly preserved. Tradition is the sum total of objects, knowledge, practices, mentalities, and attitudes informally transferred into the practice of the subsequent generation from the previous generation. Tradition is culture which is organic,

3 Those artisans who lived in or offered services for peasant communities and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century underwent a process of embourgeoisement (editor's note).



used in everyday life, and transmitted through the communication between different generations. During the research on 20<sup>th</sup> century popular culture, we managed to identify its following functions.

**Folk culture creates a primary community.** Several characteristic types of community were described during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The *speech community* is a term of the *ethnography of speaking*,<sup>4</sup> which designates a community that recognises and obeys the same rules of language and language use (Hymes 1979: 242). In our case, the speech community periodically participates in the same speech situations (everyday encounters, work, calendar holidays, and transitional rites) and knows the scenarios of speech events, speaking strategies, codes, functions and genres of speaking, linguistic stereotypes, and the interpretation norms of speech acts. From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century speech communities have begun to employ, or domesticate new techniques and codes (writing, printing, photography, film), and from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the rise of mass media (newspaper, radio), consumer behaviour began to spread among the population. The research on memory of the 20<sup>th</sup> century introduced the concept of the *community of remembrance*. According to the definition of Jan Assmann, the individual acquires the memories of the community through the process of socialisation and constantly participates in the commemorative events of the community throughout his/her life. Memories are always possessed by the members of the community of remembrance, but remembering as an event takes place under the supervision of the community. Memories related to passed time, events, spaces, objects, ancestors and contemporaries are related to the identity of the community of remembrance and to the community members. The communication of memories relevant for identity takes place within the framework of commemorative events regulating the preservation, selection, and interpretation of memory contents. The two great groups of commemorative events are communicative (everyday) and cultural (organised) memory (Assmann 1999: 35–43). In our case, families and clans, the population of the localities, as well as the occupational and religious groups are the communities which apply commemorative practices and events. Remembrance can be a moral duty, a status creating action, and it can also serve both the catching-up with the community and the reproduction of social inequality. The dynamics and tension of the community of remembrance is created by the relationship between remembrance and forgetting, the interests related to remembrance, forgetting, and distortion, as well as by the advantages and disadvantages stemming from remembering. Finally, we consider it important to use the concept of the *interpretive community*. According to the initiator of this concept, Stanley Fish, the interpretive community is the community of persons who do not necessarily know each other, but – on the basis of their background knowledge and experiences – attribute the same meanings to texts and events, being thus able to produce identical meaning (quoted by Sz. Kristóf 1998). In our case, the interpretive community evaluates traditions in the same way and condemns the departure from traditions, or, on the contrary, the

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4 Called also ethnography of communication (editor's note).

anachronism of traditions. The existence, functioning, and role of the networks and ties present in everyday economy, as well as the embeddedness of individuals into society was described by M. Granovetter (Granovetter 1994). Töhötöm Szabó labels the community of individuals who participate in the same events and influence the course of events through their collaboration a *cooperating community* (Szabó 2009, 2014). Although the latter author based this concept on the anthropology of economy, its use is also possible in other research areas related to popular culture and the research of society (e.g. rites).

**Folk culture produces memory.** As any other type of culture, folk culture also lives within memory, and thus creates social cohesion with the ancestors. In fact, it does this in a more intense form than other cultures. Tradition is a type of culture existing through transmission and reception. It is not only culture itself which is inherited through reception, but also the history of culture and the memory of the society and its individuals who also inherited, used, changed, and then transmitted this tradition. The transmission of folk culture has its own situations, rules, and strategies (to tell or to withhold, to name or to render the previous users of culture anonymous), the role system of the preservation, use, and transmission of tradition (the specialists of remembrance, the right to remember and to forget), as well as its local registers (objects, cemeteries, memorial tablets, local histories, family archives, the repertoires of narratives and texts, the rites of remembrance, the texts and the knowledge employed through the rites).

Land, territory itself is an instrument of preserving, organising, and operating genealogical memory. Family memory stores the history of the land (its acquisition, cultivation, and distribution), as well as the memory and the habits of the individuals who have acquired, inherited, and cultivated the land. As Edit Fél and Tamás Hofer have written about agricultural land: “In the same way in which peasants, through their rich body of genealogical knowledge, hold track of how the blood of the ancestors is inherited by their descendants and who the people whom it binds through kinship ties are, they also keep track of the history and inheritance process of the lands. [...] Agricultural lands evoke the memory of certain farms and families. They tell about how good a farmer the head of the family was and about his economic status, as well as document the past of the family, since the memory of its origins is also associated with the land for three to four generations, while also signalling its future, as it is generally known among which descendants it will be divided” (Fél–Hofer 1997: 19–20). For these reasons, the nationalisation and the collectivisation of lands has also marked and important turning point for the culture of remembrance.

The type of the “memory objects” was presented by Imre Gráfik, who also brought examples for this category. These objects were made for the purpose of gifting, and consecutively, as a secondary function, they preserved the memory of the individual and the place. In general, gifting took place within love, kinship, neighbourly and friendship relations. Gift-giving occasions could be the rites of transition (marriage), anniversary celebrations (birthday, name day), holidays (Christmas, New Year, Easter, Carnival), events of bourgeois and urban social life



(travel, vacation), fairs, and events of religious life (indulgence, pilgrimage). The appearance and spread of gift objects and memorabilia, as well as, more generally, the birth of the idea of the souvenir dates back to the first half and the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Gráfik 1998: 89). Along with the spread of literacy, the number of objects bearing inscriptions and especially gift objects, has also begun to rise after the 1830s.<sup>5</sup> Identification marks were applied to objects of everyday use as well. Agricultural tools (e.g. hoes) were also marked with monograms and symbols (Fél – Hofer 1961: 506).

The ethnographic school of Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) places great emphasis on memory as the mode of existence of folk culture, which is transmitted through oral texts, rites, written texts, photographs, and images. One of the most recent undertakings of this school of research deals with the analysis of local histories written by laymen, which edit the past of the localities (Keszeg szerk./ed. 2015).

**The biographical function of tradition.** Folklore research has, from its beginnings, emphasised the collective and anonymous character of folk creations and folk culture. This had a still potent negative effect on research orientations, as it eclipsed the analysis of the use and the mode of existence of folklore, as well as that of the individual's role.

The roots of the orientation directed at the research of individuality reach back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This orientation was founded and urged by Gyula Ortutay (Ortutay 1940), whose researches were continued by his pupils (Linda Dégh, Ágnes Kovács, Sándor Erdész). The series entitled *Új Magyar Népköltési Gyűjtemény* [The New Hungarian Folklore Collection], with its working method and theoretical approach based on the research on individuality, began to be published in 1940. This research orientation is known within international folkloristic as the *Hungarian school* or the *Budapest school*. As a research orientation, it presents the folklore creating and bequeathing individual within a perspective focused on his/her origins, studies, course of life, social status and relationships, the structure of his/her repertoire, the origins of his/her knowledge, the occasions of storytelling (singing etc.), the uses of storytelling/singing within his/her life, and his/her followers.

The researches conducted within the school of ethnology in of Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) after 1990 focused attention on the careers of certain social groups (priests, elementary school teachers, healers, engineers) and the research of the personal biography of the individuals within the collective career. These researches presented the career as a framework within which tradition plays a visible role in the development of personal life, and the reception, use, function, and transmission of tradition became visible and understandable within the career process.<sup>6</sup>

5 The connection between literacy and the spread of gift items is not exclusive. The practice of marking of love gifts with inscriptions has begun some decades after the appearance of object inscriptions. (K. Csilléry 1976: 126.)

6 I initiated in 2008 the book series entitled *Emberék és kontextusok* [People and Contexts], of which 14 volumes were published until 2017.

### **The Revitalisation of Popular (Peasant) Culture: Folklorism and Heritagisation as Phases of Culture Organisation**

In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – after people have become aware of the disintegration of the traditional way of life and culture due to labour migration, the two world wars, nationalisation and collectivisation, as well as the media and communication revolution –, an important resistance movement developed against ideological re-education in Hungarian society. This passive resistance of the youth was associated with a return to folk dance and folk music. In fact, this movement also had certain antecedents, since the use of folk (peasant) culture was repeatedly brought to the agenda during the 20<sup>th</sup> century within art, architecture, home design, and clothing. The movement designated with the concept of *folklorism* places tradition into a new context, alien to it, and provides it with a meaning and function different from the original. Hermann Bausinger explains folklorism in his study with the identity crisis following the disconnection from traditions, a situation in which the conscious search for the lost tradition takes place (Bausinger 1983). Hungarian-language scholarly bibliography distinguished between four types of folklorism: scientific, artistic, representational, and everyday folklorism (Bíró 1987). Two forms of existence of tradition were identified in this period: organic (authentic, functional) tradition, whose meanings and mode of use is regulated by tradition itself (this is the form of tradition I have discussed earlier), and organised tradition as the revitalisation and interpretation of a forgotten culture, which was removed from use, within an alien medium. In the period between 1890 and 1940, the use of popular tradition was received positively within the elite culture (architecture, clothing, music, and literature), while attempts to use it with ideological and political intentions were followed by vehement distancing.

The *Gyöngyösbokréta* [Pearl Bouquet] movement developed in Hungary between 1931 and 1944 with 10 local organisations and 4000 members. The aim of this movement was to renew and re-teach folk dances, folk songs, folk music, folk games, and to reintroduce traditional costumes.

The dance house movement was initiated by the young intellectual class both in Transylvania and Budapest. This movement started in both countries in the same period, namely at the end of the 1970s. An important consequence of this movement was the rediscovery of the traditions of the village forced to acculturation (i.e. culture change). The research, learning, and practicing of folk dances, folk songs, and folk music has become the new leisure occupation of the high school and university youth. The movement and singing culture practiced in cultural centres and camps enjoyed wide social spread, as folk singers, folk ensembles, and musician groups formed and dance house LPs began to be issued. Hungarian dance house LPs appeared under the series title *Élő népzene* [Living Hungarian Folk Music], and *Táncház* (Dance House). Singer Márta Sebestyén and the bands *Sebő* and *Mákvirág* (Poppy Flower) have been, and remained, emblematic figures of this generation. Vocal and instrumental folk music LPs were issued by the record company Erecord in Romania. Folk bands formed in Transylvanian cities – *Barozda* [Furrow],





*Venyige* [Grape-vine], *Regösök* [Minstrels], *Ördögszekér*,<sup>7</sup> and *Szarkaláb*<sup>8</sup> – playing live music at dance house events. Peasants were also often invited to teach dance steps. The dance house movement also took care of the next generation of dancers, as they organised the *aprók táncháza* (dance house for small children) along with the *öregék táncháza* (dance house for old folks). Dance houses organised annual national meetings under the name *Kaláka*.<sup>9</sup> The members of this movement, who had a predilection for calling themselves the “nomadic generation”, visited villages, talked with elderly people familiar with peasant culture directly from the tradition, and learned folk songs, folk tales, the making and use of folk instruments, and dance steps from them. They turned with the same attention towards the handicrafts (weaving, wood carving).

In Hungary, the *Röpülj, páva* [Fly, Peacock] movement was organised between 1969 and 1981 with the aim of renewing folk dance, folk songs, and traditional costumes. The *Magyar Televízió* [Hungarian Television] regularly broadcast the footage of these events. The movement was reborn in 2012 under the name *Fölszállott a páva* [The Peacock Took Off]. It was initiated by the *Médiaszolgáltatás-Támogató és Vagyonkezelő Alap*.<sup>10</sup> The *Hagyományok Háza* [Heritage House] participated in its organisation, and it was popularised by the *Duna Televízió*.<sup>11</sup> The movement grows to ever larger proportions every year, and it also encourages the preparation and the exchange of experience between dance groups.

The centre of the dance house movement was Budapest for Hungary and Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) for Romania. Members of the first generation of the movement, who graduated from the university in these cities, scattered throughout the country, and dance houses were thus opened in several larger cities. In the 1980s, cultural life was supervised by the communist regime in both countries. The dance house movement and folk culture represented a new orientation of the younger generation and fulfilled the function of a counterculture. However, dance houses succeeded in gaining the tolerance of the political power without young people being forced to conform to the official ideology.<sup>12</sup>

7 Literally: Devil’s Carriage. Called tumbleweed in American culture. A dried plant that tumbles in the wind. In Transylvania most usually the dried field eryngo (*Eryngium campestre*) forms tumbleweeds (editor’s note).

8 Literally: Magpie’s Foot. A plant (Forking Larkspur / *Consolida regalis*) from Eurasia, very common in Transylvania. (editor’s note)

9 In its original meaning: joint and mutual voluntary work, evening gathering; work-bee or work-party (translator’s note).

10 Media Services and Support Trust Fund, the cooperation of the four public media services: *Magyar Rádió* – the Hungarian Radio Corporation, *Magyar Televízió* – Hungarian Television, *Duna Televízió* – Danube Television, and *Magyar Távirati Iroda* – literally: Hungarian Telegraphic Office, a Hungarian news agency (translator’s note).

11 Danube Television: one of the public television channels in Hungary (translator’s note).

12 The manifesto of the “nomadic generation”: Bodor ed. 1981. An anthology of texts reflecting the history and intentions of the Transylvanian dance house movement: Kóncei–Kóncei 2004. A survey of the forms and functions of folklorism: Bíró–Gagy–Péntek ed. 1987. On the history of the Hungarian dance house, see: Sándor ed. 2006.

The dance house movement gained new impetus both in Hungary and in Transylvania after 1989. The camps associated with the movement functioned at full capacity during the entire summer period. Along with the renewal of folk dance, folk music, and folks songs, other elements of traditional peasant culture also entered into focus. In 2015, traditionalist camps were organised in approximately 100 localities (folk song, dance, folk ballad, folk tale, nativity play, and traditional handicrafts camps, the revival of Christmas traditions, instrumental music instruction, folk costume sewing, weaving camps, furniture painting, woodcarving, and folk art camps).<sup>13</sup>

2. In the 1960s, a new term, *patrimony*, or *heritage*, appeared. The concept of architectural and natural heritage first spread in the 1960s, followed by the concept of cultural heritage in the 1970s. The Council of Europe defined the concept of heritage in 1985 in Granada, and in 1994, at the congress of European Local and Regional Activities a new decision was adopted about the definition and preservation of local and regional cultural heritage. “Cultural heritage” also began to be used as a term by the Council of Europe from 1992 onward. Heritage boards were created within the ministries of European countries in the 1970s, and 1980 was declared the Year of Heritage. From 1983 onwards, heritage days are annually organised in France. Today, the concept of heritage includes the natural environment, cultural traditions, localities and buildings, industrial and technological objects, artefacts, and the agricultural environment. Industrial archaeology is the scientific research of industrial heritage. Heritage studies laid the basis for new areas of academic research.

Heritage is, in fact, tradition which is preserved and popularised deliberately, in an organised form. The compilation of European, national (countrywide), regional, and local heritage lists, the description of certain cultural elements, and the development of strategies for their heritagisation (securing, exhibition, learning, and use) began during the last decade.

In the terminological debates, the assumption was raised that *heritage* can assimilate, or obscure, the concept of *culture*.<sup>14</sup> Cultural heritage does not merely designate culture, but also the attitude towards culture (Sonkoly 2009). According to a further interpretation, the spread of the view based on heritage radically alters the attitude to the environment: living space as well as an entire part of everyday life is musealised.<sup>15</sup> The revaluation of culture as heritage carries the obvious advantage that it renders culture accessible and guarantees its preservation. In our view, the expression “cultural heritage” has a legal and administrative nature. It becomes guaranteed and mandatory as the preservation, transmission, and reception of heritage. Its new classification radically alters the status and the manner of

13 I used the database of the support programme of a non-governmental foundation for the collection of these data.

14 See Árpád Töhötöm Szabó's article in the present volume (editor's note).

15 On the history and interpretation of heritagisation, see: Poulot 1993, Babelon–Chastel 1994, Poirrier–Vadelorg 2003, Smith 2006.



using culture, including folk culture. On the one hand, it draws culture along with other areas of heritage under the same (new) blanket term and transforms it into an object of preservation (natural heritage, industrial heritage). On the other hand, all interconnected areas of culture without an established routine of their relationships in everyday use are brought under the designation of “cultural heritage”. The new administrative supervision and use of the areas of culture permanently establishes new relationships within these domains. Among the areas included under the umbrella of “cultural heritage”, this classification most sensitively affects the status and the way of use of folk culture. Hitherto, it was the community of users, the “folk” who decided the fate of folk culture (transmission or abandonment, variation/actualisation). The existence, role, and function of folk culture were only clear to its actual users. Heritagisation, however, forcibly snatches folk culture from the hands of its users, fixes it into a permanent form (removing its variation and actualisation), introduces it into an alien medium, and imposes its knowledge and preservation as a part of mass or popular culture. Presentation on stage and in the museum, as well as popularisation in an entertaining, playful manner have become new forms of use of popular culture.<sup>16</sup>

In Romania, heritagisation contributes to the survival of tradition in two ways. As in the case of folklorism, one of the contexts of heritagisation consists in the revaluation of traditions at gastronomic and dance festivals, local celebrations, and within tourism. The second context is that of the inclusion of traditions into a repository of values. In neither of the cases, the fate of traditions is decided by the people familiar with the practice of the traditions, but by the members of an entrepreneurial class (referents, animators, cultural organisers).

3. The revitalisation of traditions creates new circumstances for traditions. This process dis-embedded the traditions from their original context and raised awareness about the traditional character and value of cultural elements. Also, it integrated the understanding and practicing of traditions into group cultures, as groups and events for the preservation of tradition were created. In the case of folklorism, the preservation of tradition was established as a leisure activity. The heritagisation process created an institutional framework for culture. As educational institutions, traditionalist summer camps created the possibility for the acquisition of traditions. Camps, folklore festivals, fairs, memorial rituals, and local celebrations transformed, on the one hand, the reproduction of tradition into

16 The presentations of the conference dedicated to this issue: Keszeg dir. 2014. It was in this volume that advanced the idea that heritagisation is perhaps a justified initiative only in Western Europe, where popular culture was indeed left without social justification and forgotten; the only possible procedure for its revitalisation here is heritagisation. However, in Eastern Europe, folk culture has been preserved within community use, and heritagisation artificially removes this culture from its primary context as well as popularises, globalises and associates new rules of use and meanings to it.

The contents and the foreword of the volume: <http://adatbank.transindex.ro/vendeg/htmlk/pdf11942.pdf>. (Last accessed: 21 December 2017.)

a special knowledge, profession, and service, and on the other, they introduced buyer and consumer habits in this domain.

## Popular Culture: the Domestication of Media in Everyday Life

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the idea developed that “cultural goods” are born within high (or elite) culture, and it is from here that they “descend” or “sink down” to the level of the masses. According to this view, there are the values which are born “down there”, and also the ones “descended” from elite culture within folk (popular) culture. The Frankfurt School further radicalised this view: according to its members, the values of elite culture are destroyed, used up in this process, as the folk “sings to shreds” (*zersingen*) the values of high culture.<sup>17</sup> This theory, in fact, supported and legitimised the rigidity of ethnologic thought and the selective character of researches.

Our aim here is to offer a synthesis of the type of popular culture, which was born through the spread and “domestication” of the new media. While new media were born within elite culture (high culture), they became widespread also within popular culture, and led to a kind of culture, which became established within everyday life and private, local, glocal, and global culture, as well. Although the use of and the access to the medium occurs in an organised and institutionalised form, culture itself is far from official culture, both from the professionally practiced elite culture, or status culture, and the mass culture received and used without creativity, spread through consumerist behaviour, which manipulates the individual as well as public opinion. Ethnological research has hitherto only dealt with the way in which folklore and popular culture appeared within the media as a secondary context and with the process of its discovery for journalistic objectives. The spread of writing, then photography, film, and multimedia (the Internet) has indeed enabled the appearance of folk culture within the new medium, or new context. In fact, it is more important to look for an answer to the question regarding the type of media folklore and the new folk (popular) culture existing only within the respective medium, created by the spread of new media.

The appearance and spread of writing was one of the greatest revolutions in the culture of humanity. It significantly influenced mentality, communication, life, and human living space. According to the early anthropologists and to quantitative writing researchers, the transition to the use of writing represents the dividing line between barbarism and civilisation (Ludwig Wittgenstein, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Eric Havelock, Walter J. Ong, Jack Goody, Ian Watt, Jacques Le Goff, H. J. Martin, Kálmán Benda, István György Tóth). After 1980, a new turn occurred in writing research (*histoire culturelle de la lecture*). According to this turn, the real question within the research of the two (simultaneously and symbiotically)

<sup>17</sup> Naumann 1922. The theory is also summarised by Kaschuba 2004: 55–58.



co-existing media relates to their differing goals and to the measure in which they interfere (Joyce Coleman, Roger Chartier, J. Goody, I. Watt).

The state and the church integrated writing into their own structures. These two institutions edited, fixed, and spread ideologies, ideas, and norms through writing. The third institution, the school cultivated, in general, loyalty towards authority (the sovereign, the state, the church, or the laws). The intellectual committed to political power is generally designated with the term “organic intellectual” within the literature (Antonio Gramsci, J. Le Goff, Károly Mannheim). Access to writing was regulated by institutions. Its spread also depended upon other factors. In Europe, literacy spread faster in the cities (than in the villages), among men (as compared to women), craftsmen and merchants (than among peasants), aristocrats and members of the bourgeoisie (rather than among farmers), Protestants (than among Catholics and the Orthodox), and more in Western Europe (than in Eastern Europe). In other words, writing itself created social inequalities. Moreover, through its inexhaustible resources (image, technology, genre, and content) writing itself created the possibility for cultural differentiation.

The massification of the use of writing established a turning point in the history of writing. Due to this process, the status and the function of writing were radically changed. The democratisation of school education transferred writing from elite culture to mass culture, and the forms, genres, and language of writing were simplified and formalised.<sup>18</sup>

What kind of changes did the spread of writing bring about?

*A new architecture of knowledge<sup>19</sup> appeared. The written (and printed) text guarantees the permanence of ideas and knowledge. Ideas find their final place and linguistic elaboration within the structure of the written text, and can thus be retrieved and distributed easier as they are removed from the context of speaking (primary literacy, secondary orality). Written text has a unique form and as such it can carry the intentions and tastes of the author. At the same time, written text becomes reproducible and the property of the consumer.*

*Ideas are developed and explicitly formed through writing. Their semantic content is explicit, and a part of the message is aesthetic in nature. Instead of the acoustic code (melody, volume, tonality), writing employs visual codes (colour, characters, page layout).*

*Writing facilitates remembering, and it becomes a basic form of cultural memory. The access to ideas and ideals is easier and more democratic. The past is accessible and clear; writing significantly contributes to the formation of historical sensibility.*

*In the history of communication, it was writing, which made the transcending of geographic and temporal distances possible.*

18 The idea was formulated by T. W. Adorno: the culture industry and the mass culture forces intellectual products down to the level of consumability. The culture industry is “admittedly the culture of those expelled by culture”. (Adorno 2003/1972: 102, 106.)

19 The term is employed by Csaba Pléh in Pléh 2001: 68.

Besides the elite, official culture, writing also spread within private, personal culture. In the private sphere, the use of writing is strongly related to the identity, mentality, and intentions of individuals. Writing transmits messages between the individual and his/her environment; according to its everyday function, private writing does not necessarily attempt to be beautiful and correct. In fact, we can even talk about a rebellious function of writing (such as in the case of graffiti), and sometimes writing does not even aim to be enduring.

The ethnologic school of Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) has for a long time now extended its scope of research to popular writing. We use the term *popular literacy* to one of the domains of writing use and written culture, to writing practiced by the individual (an intellectual or a manual labourer) outside of an institutional framework, not in its form acquired in an educational institution, but within the framework of everyday life, at his own initiative. The products of amateur, naïve, and private writing, gestures and rites, objects and technological instruments, environments, and attitudes associated with writing and its use, the motivations and functions of writing, cognitive structures and social relations created by writing, as well as knowledge, tradition, and beliefs related to writing are all parts of popular writing. During our researches, we analysed the presence of writing in rituals, communication, naïve and amateur creation, the structuring and storage of memory (amateur history), the construction of narrative and genealogical identity, the storage of pragmatic knowledge (song books, soldier's books, cookbooks, handwritten booklets on medical cures for humans and animals, prayer and religious song collections), as well as within the structuring and inscribing of life space. Popular writing fulfils various functions (religious, magical, legal, economic, and aesthetic), it represents different meanings and attitudes, and its practice is based on varied habits of writing and writing use.<sup>20</sup>

Writing became domesticated and integrated into everyday life throughout several centuries and in different functions. This same process also occurred with pictures and films. The character and usability of new media has been described by a rich literature. The pioneering basic researches, empirical data collections, and interpretations of sources presenting the private use of photography and film were conducted within the doctoral school of ethnology from Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca).

Anna-Mária Szalma traced the integration of photography into everyday life through the analysis of three family photo archives. The approximately two thousand photographs present the entire last century, the lifetimes of two or three generations, and the worlds of a village, a small town, and a large city. At the beginning, the focus of the camera and the photographer appeared as representatives of an authority commanding respect within the organisation of (festive) life, later becoming increasingly integrated into the context of everyday life. Through photograph as a medium and an object, and through photographing as an act, the

20 The monograph establishing and summarising the research on popular writing: Keszeg 2008. Research summaries: family archives (Vajda 2013, 2014), local histories (Keszeg ed. 2015), writing within rituals (Bajkó 2010), the life work of amateur, naïve authors (Ambrus ed. 2008, Vajda ed. 2008, Oszváth ed. 2012).



individual maintains a relationship with his/her ancestors, represents his/her own life career, formulates and distributes a message about himself/herself, and learns about his/her environment, life world, social relations, as well as about life worlds removed in time and space. The author applies a methodical and consistent anthropological approach to the photo camera and the cultural and individual gestures related to photography, as well as to the history of photographs and to the world reflected by them (Szalma 2014).

After the invention of photography, the film appeared within the history of immortalisation, communication, self-expression, and representation as a new medium and form of text. Melinda Blos-Jáni has followed the domestication of the camera, filming, and films within the family circle. Her three case studies and corpus analyses have distinguished between three time periods of Transylvanian filmmaking, and she has also described the specific habits of filming and film use of these individual epochs (Blos-Jáni 2014, 2015).

Mass media (both commercial and public service media) has opened its space before users early on.

Commercials are a type of folkloric text, which employs private speech in the media through resorting to the expressive possibilities of a certain medium; it presents content in a repetitive way by using text clichés and stereotypes. The emergence and spread of commercial advertisements in the 1830s was related to the boom in industrialisation and commodity turnover. These advertisements formulated and distributed the local producer (artisan and agricultural entrepreneur) and merchant identity (self-affirmation, pragmatic speech, and the attempt to remodel everyday life). Advertisements fulfilled several roles within popular culture: they conveyed information, advanced arguments for quality, proposed lifestyle and consumption habits, raised the population up to a certain level of consumption, represented producer, commercial, and consumer identity, while also spreading logical and linguistic stereotypes for talking about products and quality.<sup>21</sup>

The printed press spread current micro-societal messages (of the family or the locality). The publication of obituaries in newspapers has been practiced from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The newspaper published in 1848 in Kolozsvár reported about the deaths of famous personalities variously under the titles of *Necrolog* [Necrology], *Gyász hír* [Obituary Notice], *Halálozás* [Departures]. The two or three-line texts used in each case always represented the editorial position. It took a long time for the heading to be definitively established in the newspaper entitled *Kolozsvári Közlöny* [The Kolozsvár Bulletin]. Between 1858 and 1860, the newspaper published death announcements under the headings of *Necrolog* [Necrology], *Gyász hír* [Obituary Notice], *Gyászjelentés* [Death Announcement], *Szomorújelentés* [Sad Announcement] in its columns entitled *Kolozsvári napló* [Kolozsvár Journal], *Különb-félék* [Miscellanea], *Apró hírek* [Classified News], and *Újdonságok* [News].

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21 For the analysis of advertising as part of media folklore, see: Keszeg 2013.

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, condolences and acknowledgements also appear and become permanent in the press.

The genre of the “request show” offers a striking example for media folklore within tertiary or analogue media (radio, television). The most popular of these programmes was broadcast by the *Duna Televízió* [Danube Television]. This satellite television station started in 1992, undertaking to serve the needs both of the citizens of Hungary and Hungarians living abroad and in emigration (from 2012 complemented by the international television service called Duna World). The programme entitled *Kívánságkosár* [Basket of Requests] was popular on all continents, receiving the messages of television viewers starting at noon for two hours via telephone, postal mail, and e-mail. These individually or collectively drafted messages saluted family members, friends, and acquaintances on their birthdays, name days, and on holidays. The television presenter associated Hungarian folk songs, so-called *nóta* (a form of 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian popular song, *cigányzene*, literally meaning “Gipsy music” but used to refer to a number of styles of Hungarian folk music played in a typical Gipsy musical style), pop songs, and, less frequently, international hits to the viewers’ messages. Each broadcast offered the possibility for 10 to 20 requests. The last broadcast was aired on December 31, 2015. According to the account presented on this occasion, the “Basket of Requests” aired for 2800 days and on approximately 5500 occasions.

The popular request programme of the Romanian television *Vine Cluju’ pe la noi* [Cluj Is Coming to Us], was initiated in 2001 by S. V. Vaida and aired on television stations TVR Cluj and TVR3. This is a weekly programme offering mostly folk music and other folk genres, with performances from both recognised artists and singers at the start of their career. The television programme is often broadcast from different cultural regions. Over the years, a large section of Romanian society living a rural lifestyle and with rural interests started to follow the programme. Viewers can make their song requests via telephone and mail.

After the spread of digital technology and alphabetisation, quaternary (digital) media (web 2.0) opened up several possibilities for folklore-type culture (blog, image and video sharing, Wikipedia, networking sites). Folklore, which appeared within the medium of digital media is known as “e-folklore” or “cyber folklore”, while its research was dubbed as “netnography”. R. Kozinets studied some aspects of the network culture of online communities using the method of participant observation from ethnography. The characteristics of this new culture are: the lack of face-to-face interaction, the optionality of local, glocal, and global communication links, a certain measure and form of anonymity, and the accessibility of community websites (Kozinets 2010; for antecedents, see: Hine 2000, Miller–Slater 2000). According to the interpretation of the Polish researchers, network communications enabled the renewal of classic and contemporary oral folklore within the online medium. The World Wide Web is merely a new (secondary) medium of representation. The folklore forms developed on the Internet are urban legends and tales spread through the blogs. Cyber-folklore (or e-folklore) is the new folklore appearing in the cyberspace (the Web and the Internet), which does not exist in





face-to-face situations, but only on the Internet (networks, YouTube). Online communication allows for the manifestation of orality; however, orality is not the sole, or not the characteristic form of communication. Some of the media and means of expression of e-folklore are traditional, while others were born after the spread of Internet culture, within a wide variety of situations (Burszta–Pomiecinski 2012, Zdrodowska 2012).

## **Has There Ever Been a Socialist-Communist Popular Culture?**

After World War II, the new Romanian regime started to work with great effort to modernise the country.

There was great industrial progress after 1944.<sup>22</sup> The economic life of the regime of popular power, the age of socialism and communism was defined by important events. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1947, Romania turned into a republic ruled by the people. The Ninth Romanian Communist Party Congress was held from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 1965, electing Nicolae Ceaușescu as the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1969, Nicolae Ceaușescu was appointed President of the Council of State by the National Assembly, which was the beginning of his personality cult, intolerant of any difference of opinion. From 1968, multilaterally developed socialist society has become the new social ideal. In 1974, the construction of society reached a new turning point, and the multilaterally developed society stepped into the phase of the construction of communism. The new human ideal was identified with the multilaterally developed socialist man.

Alphabetisation was an important part of this process. As education became compulsory, an important part of school age children was integrated into the education system. The first campaign directed at eliminating illiteracy in Romania was developed in the 1950s and 1960s. The level of literacy was raised to 90% by 1990. Several educational reforms and measures followed each other after World War II. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1948, the Reform Act on Education was passed in Romania. According to this act, private and religious schools were shut down, and education was democratised and became accessible for everyone, irrespective of personal origins, creed, and nationality. Scientific and historical materialism became the new spirit of education. The levels of schooling were preschool, primary, middle, and higher education. The educational approach was based on the idea of class struggle. In 1953, the Great Assembly voted in favour of establishing workers' universities with 1, 2, and 3-year educational programmes, with full-time attendance, evening courses and no mandatory class attendance. A decision adopted in 1959 institutionalised evening and "no attendance" education also at the regular university level,

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22 The source of the industrial historical data presented below is: Bălan–Mihăilescu 1985.

and thus it became possible for working adults to continue their education. First, it has become compulsory to complete 7, then 10, and finally 12 classes.

The generation raised within socialist educational institutions launched itself into a state-building process. At first, they lived in barracks on the building sites, and then the new regime constructed millions of tower block apartments and made these easily available to them. New furniture was also designed for these homes. At the same time, a ruralisation process took place in the lives of the masses that have moved into these working-class districts.<sup>23</sup>

The so-called “cultural home” was at the centre of socialist culture. Its name was chosen very consciously: these centres were meant to serve as homes for the population. During the socialist period, a cultural home was constructed for each locality. (This institution was named “cultural house” in the cities.) The socialist cultural home offered a variety of programmes to the public: it screened films, served as a place where one could watch television before television sets became widespread, the younger generation gathered here for the disco, balls were organised for adults, and the cultural centres also offered a site for amateur theatre.

After 1945, a new reading culture also took root in Romania. Ideologically guided criticism condemned and compromised bourgeois tastes and attitudes, as well as folk-tale traditions within children’s literature. Book publishing tried to make up for the lack of combative narratives through implanting a translation literature. In 1940s and 1950s, I. V. Stalin’s *Az ifjúság legjobb barátja* [The Youth’s Best Friend], *Szovjet népmesék Leninről és Sztálinról* [Soviet Folk Tales about Lenin and Stalin], *Minszki Lajos kommunista ifjúmunkás hősies élete* [The Heroic Life of Communist Youth Worker Lajos Minszki], M. Prilejaeva’s youth novel *Melletted vagyunk, elvtárs* [We’re with You, Comrade], *A kolhozifjúság boldog élete* [The Happy Life of the Kolkhoz Youth], and the collection of discourses entitled *A kommunista nevelésről* [On Communist Education] of M. I. Kalinin were published in 5000 to 8000 copies in Romania. From the 1970s onwards, the heroic rewriting of the biographies of common people sympathetic to the regime was put on the agenda of the Romanian media. Literary narratives of the new world were also prepared in the workshops of domestic authors, such as the novels *Fiatal szívvel* [With a Young Heart, 1952] by István Asztalos, *Réz Mihályék kóstolója* [The Taster of Mihály Réz, 1946], *A legmagasabb hőfokon* [On the Highest Temperature, 1951], and *A mi lányaink* [Our Girls, 1954] by István Nagy, *Inasok* [Apprentices, 1953, 1954 (?)], *Új mozdony* [New Locomotive, 1951], and *Viharos tető* [Stormy Heights] by Ferenc Papp or the short story *Új bocskor*<sup>24</sup> [New Opanak, 1954] by András Sütő. The subject structure of the novels mostly presented the conflict between the positive heroes sympathising with the new ideas and mentality, on the one hand, and the traditionalist and therefore increasingly anachronistic characters, on the other hand, as well as the nationalisation of factories and the collectivisation of the lands.

23 On the literary representation of worker subculture, see: Balázs 2007.

24 Traditional footwear from the Balkans, characteristic mainly to rural regions (editor’s note).



Films, however, played a much more important role in propagating the ideals of communism than literary novels. At the end of 1948, the movie industry was nationalised on the basis of Act No. 303. Consequently, the movie theatre turned mostly into an institution of political propaganda. This fact is illustrated by the statistics according to which, in the last quarter of 1948, of the 715 films showcased in Romanian movie theatres, 428 were from the USSR.<sup>25</sup> Their stories, taking place on national construction sites or in factories, were aimed at ennobling the pointless and inefficient socialist production through fiction and tried to heroise the political elite lacking in moral and intellectual qualities as well as the unity of the peasantry and the intellectual class organised around the party (*Răsună valea*, Hungarian title: *Zeng a völgy* [The Valley Resounds], 1951; *Nepoții gornistului/A trombitás unokái* [The Grandchildren of the Trumpeter], 1952; *Desfășurarea/Kibontakozás* [The Unfolding], 1954; *Cu mâinile curate/Tiszta kézzel* [With Clean Hands], 1972; *Accident/Baleset* [Accident], 1976; *Operațiunea „Monstru”/A „szörny” akció* [Operation “Monster”], 1976).<sup>26</sup> In socialist Romania, film was the sole medium to consequently represent president Nicolae Ceaușescu’s conviction – borrowed from Stalin – about the current relevance of revolutionary romanticism. The communist party decided on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1970 to extend censorship to films and television.<sup>27</sup>

In the socialist period, national history has become part of popular culture. The Daco-Roman origins of the Romanian people and the theory of Daco-Romano-Romanian continuity became part of the official view on history in the 1970s. Its spread was largely due to the cinematographic representation of the “romantic nationalist” school’s ideas in films such as *Dacii/Dákok* (The Dacs, 1967), which was viewed by 13 million people, the Romano-Germanic co-production *Columna* (The Column, 1968), with 10 million viewers, and *Burebista* (1980), seen by almost 5 million spectators. The heroisation of Romanian historical figures also went on in other movies, such as *Mihai Viteazul* (Michael the Brave, 1971, 13 million viewers), *Ștefan cel Mare* (Stephen the Great, 1974, 7 million viewers), and *Mircea* (1989, 460000 viewers). Socialist Romanian films were also fond of the subject of the Russo-Romanian military alliance.

The daily newspapers (such as the Romanian *Scântea* [The Sparkle], 1944–1989, and the Hungarian-language *Előre* [Forward], 1953–1989) were published in large

25 Online: <http://www.comunismulinromania.ro/aspecte-documentare/articole/183-cinematografia-in-primii-ani-ai-comunismului.html>. (Last accessed: 10 August 2009.)

26 According to an analysis, the film production of communist Romania first carried out the mythologisation of history, followed by the creation of the invincible and ubiquitous socialist hero. Online: <http://www.sferapoliticii.ro/sfera/135/art13-alexandru.html>. (Last accessed: 8 August 2009.)

27 Berindei–Dobrincu–Goșu 2012: 558–571. This issue was put again on the agenda on 26 July 1971. Idem 638–648.

numbers.<sup>28</sup> The Romanian radio was nationalised in 1948. The drastic liquidation of the regional studios took place in 1985. Until the fall of the regime, there were two radio channels which broadcasted from 6 a.m. to 24:00. Television broadcasts began on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1956, airing on two channels between 1968 and 1985, and on a single channel from 1985, with a daily two-hour airtime.

The leisure-time culture of the time period included trips to nature with car and tent, beach holidays, camping, vacations at holiday resorts, and Mayday picnics as new initiatives.

Two opposing tendencies polarised within the popular culture of the epoch: the communist myth constructed and spread by the regime on one side and the defence mechanism opposed to this myth on the other. The content components of the communist myth were: the heroic national past, including the workers' movement with its victories and participants, the natural beauty and richness of the country, the epic narrative of constructing the new world, and the biography of the communist leader.<sup>29</sup> The "red" myth ushered in a new "common era". The annual calendar started with the birthday celebrations of the Party's General Secretary and of his wife, the "learned woman" (the 26<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, respectively). During the entire month, the media spread the congratulatory telegrams of the party cells, the exaggerated and unrealistic promises of the economic units, the various creations made especially for the occasion by artists and pseudo-artists, and the engaged declarations of private individuals. The events culminated with the birthday congratulation ceremony of the couple and their festive discourses. The same ceremony was repeated at the Romanian Communist Party's founding anniversary (the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 1921). The myth infiltrated into the celebration of the International Labour Movement (the 1<sup>st</sup> of May), International Women's Day (the 8<sup>th</sup> of March), Romania's accession to the Russian bloc (the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1944), and the abolition of monarchy and the declaration of Romania as a republic (the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1947). The party congresses and occasional party conferences became national events of similar importance. Journalism applied terms such as "the golden age" and "the age of light" without reservations. Ceaușescu was the "glorious leader", "the Genius of the Carpathians", "the Country's Son", and "the Hero of Peace". Architectural objects representing the regime (such as the local headquarters of the Romanian Communist Party, monuments of the Labour Movement or other historical monuments) were erected in the centre of every major settlement). The accessories of the cult of nationalism, communism, and Ceaușescu's personality (such as historical frescoes, the emblem and the flag of the communist party, the portrait and the statue of the General Secretary, quotes from the General Secretary's discourses, and the volume entitled *Omagiu* [Homage], containing praises

28 The newspaper *Scînteia* [The Spark] was published in 1 million copies daily. Online: [http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv\\_web/general/articol/confesiunile-lui-sorin-toma-redactor-ef-cel-mai-mare-ziar-al-rom-niei-n](http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/confesiunile-lui-sorin-toma-redactor-ef-cel-mai-mare-ziar-al-rom-niei-n). (Last accessed: 5 November 2015.) Both the *Scînteia* and *România liberă* [Free Romania] appeared in 3 million daily copies during the 1980s. Online: <http://www.evz.ro/scanteia-ziarul-cu-doua-fete-703714.html>. (Last accessed: 5 November 2015.)

29 The interpretation of Romanian communism as a myth: Boia 2005, Bodó 1998.



of the General Secretary) were compulsory decorations of official premises. The *Cîntarea României* (in Hungarian: *Megéneklünk, Románia*) movement<sup>30</sup> was also started by the political authorities in 1976. The festival soon grew into a mass movement experimenting with the revaluation of national traditions.<sup>31</sup> One of the characteristic genres of the *Cîntarea României* consisted in mass scenes presented on the public squares of cities and towns. The years spent in the communist movement (from 1933 to 1945) by the party's General Secretary were put into writing by O. Matichescu in 1981, becoming thenceforth compulsory reading and teaching material (Matichescu 1981).

The counter-myth developed and spread within informal circles. Its first wave was based on the experiences of the social classes marginalised and persecuted as a result of the collectivisation and nationalisation (craftsmen, the relatively prosperous peasants known as *kulaks*, priests, and intellectuals). The basic experience of its second wave lay in the forced construction of the country, the ideological terror, the arrogance of the political machinery, the cult of Ceaușescu's personality, and the increasing isolation of the country. During the 1980s, the suffering and deprivation due to the food shortages, distrust and dishonesty, production reports, the forceful and unenthusiastic listening to the General Secretary's discourses, superficial and unprofessional work, indifference toward public property, the informal means of obtaining information, and the appreciation of communication and helping relationships have become permanent in everyday life.

The joke and the *igaztörténet* ("true story") were the most typical genres of the counter-myth. Both the telling and the recording of political jokes involved many dangers. According to one of the jokes: five years of prison for the one who tells it and three years for the one who listens to it (and does not report it). Romanian political jokes have been preserved in writing by Győző Zsigmond.<sup>32</sup>

In the 1980s, Romania has begun to repay its foreign debt through crops. In consequence, the Romanian market was left without domestic products and without imports. The time of extreme poverty has come for the country. Basic consumer goods (food, hygiene and luxury products, medicine) disappeared from the shops. Products of uncertain origins and quality could be obtained rarely, after waiting in long queues, or on the black market. This was the period in which a rich repertoire of absurd stories and rumours came to flourish within informal discourse, among acquaintances and friends. The recounting of these stories simultaneously compensated the despair due to poverty as well as expressed the feelings of repugnance towards the goods of dubious quality and the attitude of the population towards the prevailing general conditions and the corruption of the country.<sup>33</sup>

30 Literally: Song [of Praise] to Romania, translated usually as Singing Romania National Festival (editor's note).

31 *Comisia prezidențială pentru analiza dictaturii comuniste din România: Raportul Tismăneanu* [The Presidential Commission for the Study of the Romanian Communist Dictatorship: The Tismăneanu Report] 2006: 603, 613.

32 Source: Zsigmond 1997.

33 The stories and their interpretation: Keszeg 1991.

The popular culture of the socialist and communist period was not unitary. On the one hand, there was a culture synchronised with the official ideology, and on the other hand, a counterculture, turned against it. Culture users opted for one or the other of these two cultures, or used one or the other depending on context.

In December 1989, the communist regime ended in Romania, and the dictator and his wife were executed. The cognitive and social context of the socialist popular culture, i.e. everyday life, changed. The culture of socialism became the victim of forgetting and violent aggression, while a part of it is still kept alive by nostalgia communities.<sup>34</sup>

## Ethnological Formation and Research in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca)

Ethnological formation and instruction – forcibly interrupted by prolonged breaks – at the university of Kolozsvár dates back to 1898, the year of Antal Herrmann's appointment as a private university tutor. Its process ceased with the move of the university from Kolozsvár to Szeged after the Treaty of Trianon, in 1921. The first generation of alumni of Antal Herrmann's school significantly contributed to the institutionalisation and professionalisation of ethnography. They conducted their work on a national level in Hungary, within university departments, museums, and research institutes, while also producing the first scientific syntheses of Hungarian ethnography (István Györffy, Károly Viski, Zsigmond Szendrey, Gyula Istvánffy, János Banner, Sándor Bálint, Lajos Biró, János Tulogdy, Romulus Vuia, Bálint Csúri, Lajos Kelemen, Gedeon Mészöly, János Seprődi). Ethnographic instruction was revived in 1940 and went on until 1948, with the participation of Károly Viski, Béla Gunda, and László K. Kovács. The series entitled *Erdélyi Néprajzi Tanulmányok* [Transylvanian Ethnographic Studies] was published between 1943 and 1947 by the university department, containing texts on research methodology along with empirical and analytical research summaries. During these few years, the second generation of ethnographers acquired their professional expertise, carrying out their activity in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (József Faragó, Károly Kós, Olga Nagy, Júlia Szegő, István Molnár). Their ranks were joined by the researchers who have completed their studies at other university departments. Their approach and work were defined by the methods of functionalism, diffusionism, cartography, typology, and morphology, orienting the attention of the researchers and the

34 The following blog expresses nostalgia for the country touring practice of the communist period: <http://amfostacolo.ro/impresii9.php?iid=45690&d=filozofari-turistice--de-la-lume-adunate>. (Last accessed: 6 November 2015.) This blog keeps the memory of the *Cîntarea României* [Singing Romania] festival alive: <http://cantarearomaniei.blogspot.com/>. Last accessed: 6 November 2015. The existence of nostalgia is confirmed by a 2010 public opinion poll: [http://www.ires.com.ro/uploads/articole/romanii\\_si\\_nostalgia\\_comunismului.pdf](http://www.ires.com.ro/uploads/articole/romanii_si_nostalgia_comunismului.pdf). (Last accessed: 6 November 2015.) [http://adevarul.ro/locale/bistrita/nostalgii-culinare-comunism-er-au-pacaliti-carnivorii-salam-soia-copiii-salivau-suc-ci-co-1\\_5606892ff5eaafab2c056cb1/index.html](http://adevarul.ro/locale/bistrita/nostalgii-culinare-comunism-er-au-pacaliti-carnivorii-salam-soia-copiii-salivau-suc-ci-co-1_5606892ff5eaafab2c056cb1/index.html). (Last accessed: 6 November 2015.)



general public to the elements of culture, their regional organisation, the spatial occurrence and circulation of elements, and the cultural interactions between them. This was the paradigm in which the elements of traditional Hungarian culture increasingly marginalised due to social historical changes, such as Hungarian ornamental arts, folk epic, folk music and folk songs, children's folklore, and the system of folkways, were described. Important results were gained also in the research fields concerned with ethno-botanics, folk medicine, and traditional farming.

In the academic year 1990-91, an undergraduate program in ethnology was restarted for the third time at the university of Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca). It was János Péntek who prepared and started this study programme. The teachers involved in it were János Péntek (from 1990), Dóra Czégényi (from 1999), Klára Gazda (between 1991 and 2008), Vilmos Keszeg (from 1990), Csilla Köncei (from 1994), Ferenc Pozsony (from 1990), Árpád Töhötöm Szabó (from 2005), Mária Szikszai (from 2005), and Vilmos Tánczos (from 1992). Along with them, approximately fifty visiting professors have also held courses at the university's Ethnography Department. The researchers and graduates of the department, who have the status of museum curators, also participate in teaching activities. The Ethnography Department organised from the beginning the bachelor's degree and master's degree programmes, as well as the doctorate. In this new period of ethnological formation and instruction, a new generation was formed, whose members found employment in university departments, research institutes, museums, public education, the media and book publishing, as well as within public educational institutions.

The new program in ethnology successfully integrated the new approaches and methods of the interpretive turn – such as semiotics, the study of archetypes, the anthropology of communication and representation, microhistory, the analysis of social networks, content analysis, context analysis, and sociological methods – with the traditional research methods. The *Kriza János Néprajzi Társaság* [János Kriza Ethnographic Society], founded in 1990: serves as the background institution of the university department. The infrastructure of the ethnographic society permanently supports the basic researches directed at the survival elements and historical sources of peasant culture, the effects and the cultural, social as well as mental constructions of embourgeoisement, modernisation, urbanisation, and globalisation, interethnic and intercultural communication, group cultures, the strategies and consequences of cultural revitalisation, and the classical and new media revolutions. Some research results materialised in the form of a rich archive of almost 3000 data base items containing empirical data collected from 390 localities and stored on audio and visual media, making them available for further researches and interpretation. Another category of the results was incorporated into source publications, monographs, and research studies. The number of specialists who received ethnographic training after 1990 and published research studies is about 90. The compilation of the bibliography and the exploration of the history of Hungarian ethnography in Romania is currently in progress.

Eight university course books were prepared between 2006 and 2013, each one of them synthesising the results of new basic researches. These books were all published by Kriza János Néprajzi Társaság [Kriza János Ethnographic Society] and the Department of Hungarian Ethnography and Anthropology of the Babeş–Bolyai University in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca. These publications are:

- Ferenc Pozsony: *Erdélyi népszokások* [Transylvanian Folk Customs]. *Néprajzi egyetemi jegyzetek* [Ethnography Lecture Notes] 1. 2006;
- Vilmos Tánzos: *Folklórszimbólumok* [Folkloric Symbols]. *Néprajzi egyetemi jegyzetek* [Ethnography Lecture Notes] 2. 2006;
- Vilmos Keszeg: *Alfabetizáció, írásszokások, populáris írásbeliség* [Literacy, Writing Habits, Popular Scripturality]. *Néprajzi egyetemi jegyzetek* [Ethnography Lecture Notes] 3. 2008;
- Klára Gazda: *Közösségi tárgykultúra – művészeti hagyomány* [Community Material Culture – Artistic Tradition]. *Néprajzi egyetemi jegyzetek* [Ethnography Lecture Notes] 4. 2008;
- Mária Szikszai: *A művészet antropológiája* [The Anthropology of Art]. *Néprajzi egyetemi jegyzetek* [Ethnography Lecture Notes] 5. 2009;
- Ferenc Pozsony: *Erdély népei. Szászok, örmények, székely szombatosok, cigányok* [The Peoples of Transylvania: Saxons, Armenians, Székely Sabbatarians, and Gypsies]. *Néprajzi egyetemi jegyzetek* [Ethnography Lecture Notes] 6. 2009;
- Vilmos Keszeg: *A történetmondás antropológiája* [The Anthropology of Storytelling]. *Néprajzi egyetemi jegyzetek* [Ethnography Lecture Notes] 7. 2011;
- Vilmos Keszeg: *Hiedelmek, narratívumok, stratégiák* [Beliefs, Narratives, Strategies]. *Néprajzi egyetemi jegyzetek* [Ethnography Lecture Notes] 8. 2013.

The teachers of the department also published a synthetic educational material: *Magyar népi kultúra I–II. Tankönyv. Szöveggyűjtemény* [Hungarian Popular Culture. Vol. I–II. Textbook. Anthology] by István Pál Demény, Klára Gazda, Vilmos Keszeg, Ferenc Pozsony, and Tánzos Vilmos (Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca], Tankönyvkiadó, 1999, 2008).

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