

DISCOURSES OF KORUNK IN PUBLIC SPHERE ISSUES BETWEEN 1990 AND 2000

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ABSTRACT: The study attempts to give a picture about the editorial conceptions of the first period in Korunk's third wave – in this context, the research focuses on the articles on public issues (appeared between January 1990 and December 1999) released by this historic periodical. The topics of the study are: the Hungarian press/media in Transylvania; the Church; minorities; coexistence; (Hungarian) university (in Transylvania); Hungarian-conscience in Transylvania. The paper states that there are well observable discourses on these topics in Korunk, it attempts to describe them and to give a picture of that intellectual pathway Korunk tried to follow in the mentioned period.

Keywords: *Korunk, editorial conceptions, writings on public issues, period of transition, the press of minority*

In his seminal study on the Hungarian press in Romania, Attila Papp Z. writes² that the Hungarian press in Romania between 1990 and 2000 displays what he calls “grey publicity”, not only because it is

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² Cf. Papp Z. Attila: *A romániai magyar sajtónyilvánosság a kilencvenes években. A működtetők világa* – PhD Dissertation, ELTE, Budapest, 2005., <http://adatbank.transindex.ro/cedula.php?kod=45> – accessed: 2 June 2012.

monotonous, but also because the most important messages remain unsaid, linger in a kind of obscure space. Minority journalism was characterized at that time by what Papp Z. termed “framism”: the journalist plays by the frames he/she sets for him/herself, and these frames are meant to protect the ethnic group he or she represents. The operation of this frame “may get in contradiction with professional principles, conscience, yet it is constantly upheld.”³ After the dissolution of censorship, self-censorship prevails, and the primacy of the need to preserve the unity of the minority, to confront the majority in common action “frames” the discourse of the Hungarian press in Romania. The press interiorizes and adopts the subjects considered taboo by the state power, therefore the discourse of the press and of the public sphere in general are marked by conflict avoidance.⁴

Starting from this claim, I analyzed the articles of the third period of *Korunk* dealing with the public sphere, for it is clear, looking at the issues of the first ten years of this period, that the *Korunk* is strongly defined by a constant interest in public issues. The numeric aspects were measured by quantitative content analysis, completed with discourse analysis for establishing and describing the discourses used in *Korunk*. The scientific/scholarly articles published in *Korunk* significantly define the profile of the magazine, but as a cultural magazine the articles written in the traditional genres of journalism, the critiques and reviews have an equally important role. Through the overview of the editorial conceptions of *Korunk* in the 1990–2000 period from the point of view of public issues treated in them, I could open up the investigation to much wider horizons and hopefully offer a more comprehensive and nuanced image of the magazine.

³ Cf. op. cit., 82-126.

⁴ Cf. ibid.

In order to define the corpus of texts examined, I marked six categories on the basis of the thematic survey of the first ten years' issues:

1. Hungarian press/media in Transylvania
2. church
3. minorities
4. cohabitation
5. (Hungarian) university (of Transylvania)
6. identity of Hungarians in Transylvania

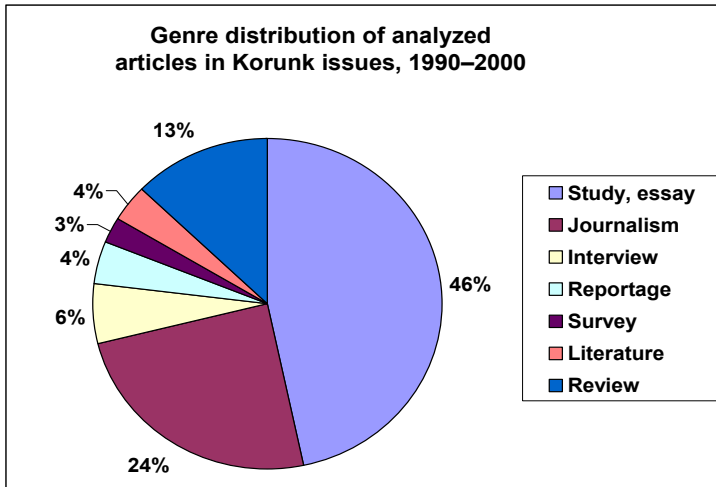
Measurements, results

The table below categorizes the examined articles (417) of the first ten years of *Korunk*.

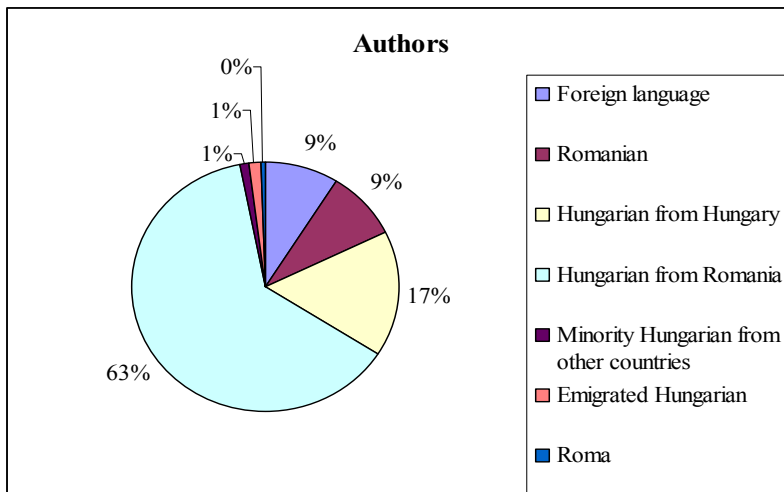
| Category | Press | Church | Minority | Cohabitation | University | Transylvanianism | Total |
|------------------------|-------|--------|----------|--------------|------------|------------------|-------|
| 1. Genre | | | | | | | |
| Study, essay | 25 | 34 | 37 | 41 | 25 | 33 | 195 |
| Journalism | 23 | 12 | 15 | 17 | 9 | 26 | 102 |
| Interview | 5 | | 5 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 24 |
| Reportage | 2 | 3 | 1 | | 5 | 6 | 17 |
| Survey | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 11 |
| Literature | 3 | 1 | 3 | 8 | | | 15 |
| review | 4 | 15 | 19 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 53 |
| 2. Authors | | | | | | | |
| Foreign language | 10 | 3 | | 16 | 5 | 3 | 37 |
| Romanian | | 6 | 8 | 18 | 1 | 4 | 37 |
| Hungarian from Hungary | 10 | 4 | 16 | 11 | 7 | 21 | 69 |
| Hungarian from Romania | 42 | 53 | 52 | 35 | 33 | 46 | 261 |
| Minority Hungarian | | | 3 | 2 | | | 5 |

| Category | Press | Church | Minority | Cohabitation | University | Transylvanianism | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| from other countries | | | | | | | |
| Emigrated Hungarian | | | 1 | 3 | 2 | | 6 |
| Roma | | | 2 | | | | 2 |
| 3. Focus of subject | | | | | | | |
| Romania as focus | 15 | 12 | 16 | 26 | 2 | 10 | 81 |
| Transylvania as focus | 20 | 38 | 33 | 16 | 27 | 60 | 194 |
| The world in general | 25 | 13 | 22 | 29 | 19 | 3 | 111 |
| Other/none | 2 | 3 | 11 | 14 | | 1 | 31 |
| 4. Time reference | | | | | | | |
| Past | 11 | 19 | 8 | 14 | 10 | 27 | 89 |
| Present | 40 | 19 | 29 | 25 | 22 | 20 | 155 |
| Future | 1 | | 6 | 3 | 2 | | 12 |
| Neutral | 5 | 21 | 26 | 26 | 11 | 15 | 104 |
| mixed | 5 | 7 | 13 | 17 | 3 | 12 | 57 |
| 5. Type of article | | | | | | | |
| Descriptive | 43 | 63 | 72 | 76 | 47 | 69 | 370 |
| Polemical | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 5 |
| Dialoguing | 7 | | 3 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 22 |
| Other | 10 | 2 | 6 | 1 | | 1 | 20 |
| Articles, total | 62 | 66 | 82 | 85 | 48 | 74 | 417 |

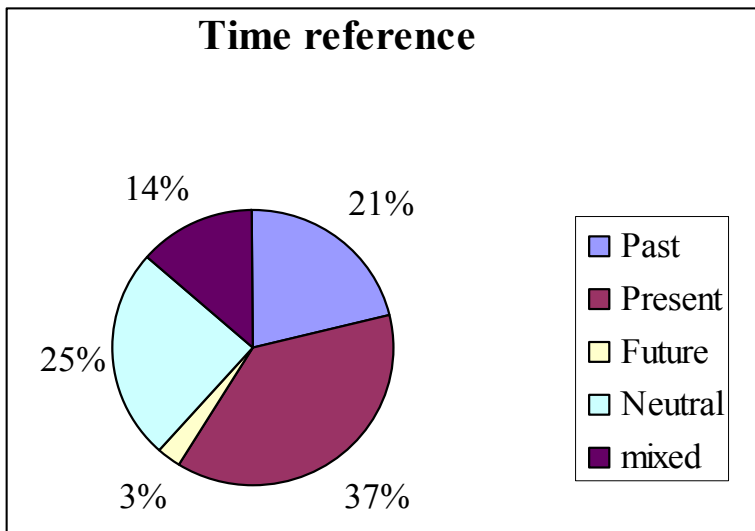
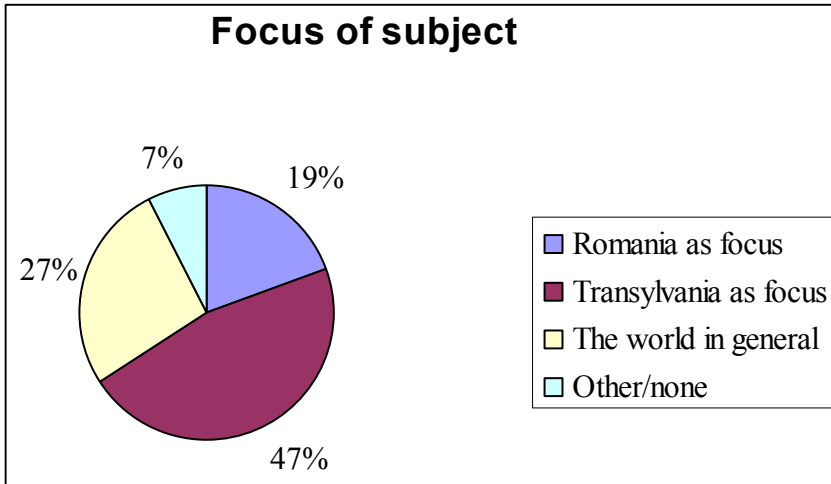
It does not come as a surprise that the subjects analyzed are primarily treated in studies and essays (46%), then journalism (24%). The numbers also reveal that a primary interest of the editors was to inform the readers: reviews were much more significant in the magazine (13%) than traditional genres of journalism. Interviews, reportage and surveys appeared in roughly the same amount (3-6%).



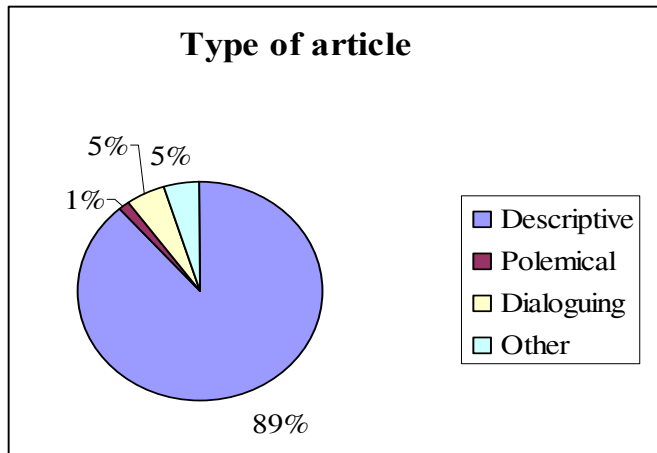
Most articles are written by Hungarian authors from Romania (63%); also, there is a significant presence of Hungarian intellectuals from Hungary (17%), in accordance with the traditions of the magazine. Romanian and foreign authors appear in identical percentage (9 – 9%).



The *Korunk* approaches the subjects primarily in a Transylvanian focus (47%), and interestingly enough, it analyzes these subjects in a wider, global perspective more frequently (27%) than in a national one (19%).



The analysis of the time reference reveals that the subjects are mostly treated in a present time reference (37%), but the need to know one's past, the need for remembering is also significant in addressing urgent matters (21%). Future time reference is not prevalent in these articles, and, since most of these texts are theoretical in their approach, this category does not apply to 25% of the articles.



A very interesting result of the analysis is that only 1 percent of the 417 texts surveyed is polemical, and 89% are descriptive materials.

Description and comparison of the discourses

1. The analysis of articles on **media** / **the press** reveals the following discourses used:
 - a) particularities of contemporary Hungarian written press in Romania - writings that outline the characteristics of Hungarian written press in Romania: language use, preferred subjects, ways and methods of writing or structuring of articles, the life of editorial offices, financial and other difficulties, professional competence of journalists;

- b) situation of the press/media in the transition period – this discourse contains articles that present the journalistic legacy of the past regime, the press market in the economic situation of the transition period, the influence of the Romanian press, reading habits, and all the problems caused by social, economic and cultural changes in the media;
 - c) particularities of Hungarian press publicity in Romania – it contains mainly analytical articles, which show the particularities of Hungarian public discourse, the lack of criticism of Hungarian public life and public figures, the poetization of textual media, the intertwining of public life and the press, etc.;
 - d) effects of television and the internal functioning of television in Transylvania – including articles about the social and cultural effects of television, phenomena connected to it, particularities of Romanian television channels; the Hungarian television in Romania is different from this as presented in the *Korunk*, Hungarian television in Romania is meant to serve the Hungarian public life in Transylvania, and its operation is always hindered by various, primarily financial, difficulties.
2. Discourses on the **church** in the *Korunk* can be described as follows:
- a) anomalies of the internal affairs of the churches – collaboration of priests with the Securitate, the need for internal renewal, needs of the congregation, ways to better reach out to the congregation, reform of sermons, description of priests' attitudes to their profession;
 - b) internal spiritual life of Hungarians from Romania – cohabitation, tolerance of Transylvanian churches, Transylvanian ecumenism, functioning of religious sects, their spreading in Hungary and Romania;

