

## **Journalism versus literature? Zoltán Ambrus's hybrid genre texts in the periodical entitled *A Hét***

At the end of the nineteenth century, when the mass media came into being, for many literary men (for instance the literary historians Pál Gyulai and József Nagy) newspapers appeared as the enemies of the culture represented by books. They thought the short, flimsy, standardized genres of journalism would replace the lengthier literary genres of a high standard and would deprive the value of the literary works of the age. The idea of newspaper-writing as the dark side of the professional writer (Liddle, 2001) was widespread amongst the authors who shared the two roles, who were both writers and journalists. However if we study the newspapers and periodicals of the age, we can easily notice that the contrast between the newspaper-writing and literary practice was not so violent. Literature not only accommodated to the challenge of journalism, but also profited from the new opportunities generated by the press: new genres appeared as the novel-feuilleton. This study is going to identify itself with the discourse which emphasize the positive benefits of the 19th century press on the literary works.

Zoltán Ambrus was an important writer, journalist and critic writer at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. His study entitled *Literature and journalism* (1906) is often cited by literary historians as a representative text of the age referring to the dilemma of those authors who were both writers and journalists. In this study Ambrus summed up the negative effects of journalism on literature, but in reality his attitude to newspaper-writing was much more complex. Ambrus's oeuvre was determined by the press: newspapers meant for his literary works the primary context and newspapers, periodicals of the age contain also valuable pieces which weren't published in his books: hybrid/cross-genre texts, products of the interference between literature and journalism. The biggest part of these writings appeared in the most important Hungarian literary, artistic and social journal of the turn of the century entitled *A Hét*. The editors of the periodical were also concerned with the daily political and social news, *A Hét* represented a productive context for those authors who were both writers and journalists. In the columns like *Chronicle*, *Feuilleton*, *Saison* the daily events appeared in the form of "light opera", "short play", "poem", "diary", "letter" etc. Ambrus was an inventive author of

these genres, which represent a big variety of form, style and modality, preferring humour and parody. In the columns containing hybrid genres both journalistic and literary talent and creativity could succeed.

The paper will present some of these type of texts written by Zoltán Ambrus, will look for strategies of interpretation in the fields of media history (Barbier, Briggs) and theory of genres (Bahtin, Liddle). Its main purpose is to demonstrate that the daily press at the end of the 19th century didn't mean a real crisis for the literary practice, rather it represented a productive context for the interferences of literature and journalism.

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