

The Reviewer, the Publisher and the Literary Agent: cultural mediators in the literary flow from Canada in the changing Hungarian literary field between 1989 and 2014.

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In the aftermath of the political change of 1989, the structure of the literary field has radically changed in Hungary on micro, meso and macro levels as well. The number of Hungarian translations from Russian decreased and multidirectional translation flows have emerged, integrating Hungary into a global literary field, and satisfying market demands at the same time. These translation flows have been asymmetrical, heavily influenced by political, economic and cultural factors (Sapiro, 2016), and while they have been “an instrument of temporal acceleration” (Casanova 2002:9), they have also been integral in changing the roles and practices of agents in the literary field. Before 1989, the reviewers of literary works have either played into censorship processes or have been instrumental in smuggling literary products into a closed field. The practice of reviewing continued into the next era as well, but the selection processes of the publishers have gradually changed, as they have started to rely on the mediating services of a new entity, the literary agent, as well as incorporated open, web-based sources into their selection procedures.

By studying the changing and overlapping roles of cultural mediators from an agent and process-oriented approach (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts eds., 2018), this paper attempts first to point out phases of structural change, and secondly identify how the selection strategies practiced by the various mediators in the Canadian – Hungarian literary flow have evolved. A quantitative survey of translated Canadian literature (CEACS database, 2016) will point to peaks and lows in the production, while qualitative research through semi-structured interviews will reveal aspects of the mediators’ agency and habitus. The third aim of the study is to examine the applicability of QDA software in the data analysis.

References

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