

What is the Rationale of Periodization? On the Epochs of Hungarian, Polish and Slovenian Literature from the 16th Century to 1939

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Abstract: Literary evolution in Hungary and Poland has had very much in common since the very beginning up to the present, but the division into epochs within each national literature has always been considerably different. Political changes played an important part in distinguishing various epochs of Hungarian literary history in the scholarship. Certain scholars combine the historical periods with literary movements or with spiritual movements.

In Polish and Slovenian periodization literary movements dominate. The term *Enlightenment* and *Positivism* are also current. The latter corresponds to *Realism* and *Naturalism* in Hungarian and Slovenian criticism. The period between 1918–1939 does not have a common name in Hungary and Poland, whereas it is referred to as *Expressionism* and *Social Realism* in Slovenia. The comparative periodization of literatures in East-Central Europe can make literary scholars' views more exact in cases when opinions differ in stating time limits for different periods. Such a comparison may contribute to a more thorough understanding of the "phase delays" that may have occurred between these literatures.

Keywords: East-Central Europe, complete literatures (Polish, Hungarian), incomplete literatures (Slovenian), phase delays (17–19th centuries)

Our study will compare the different periodizations of the literary histories of three Central/Eastern European nations in order to contribute to the general research the principal aim of which is the comparative examination of the literatures of the Eastern European region. The primary focus of our analysis is not directly on the literary phenomena themselves, although we will include some comments on certain literary processes. Instead, we are going to correlate post-1956 Hungarian literary opinions with their Polish and Slovenian counterparts. Since we wish to provide some points of departure for a typology of literatures in Central/Eastern Europe, we have chosen to investigate a remarkably long chronological line: starting from the 16th century to the beginning of WWII. A long chronology makes it impossible for us to discuss minor details on the one hand, yet, it may permit the inclusion of certain typological observations (but never value judgments). Through comparing the names of the individual periods and contrasting their beginning and ending dates, our objective is to identify the chief characteristics of these three national literatures. We will repeatedly have to refer to the phenomenon called *Phasenverschiebung* in German or *décalage chronologique* in French. The identification of shifts between time periods may assist us in portraying the literatures of the region that were born in unrelated languages.

The complex quality of these “delays” demands that we execute the particular comparisons of the three literatures very conscientiously and from a variety of aspects. As regards this issue, we will adhere to the following view on separating different literary historical periods, proposed by the Polish scholar Jerzy Ziomek:

We have to examine the value of the transition periods from two aspects. [...] There are two characteristics that serve the purpose of denoting the transition between time periods: length and intensity. The fact that we oftentimes have difficulty in pinpointing the date that begins or ends a specific period should not be regarded a deficiency of our workshop, as this is caused by a given objective feature. The time periods, which we will continue to consider as a conjunctural system of trends, can transform into new qualities either quickly or slowly (the length of the transition period), or, can change either significantly or to a negligible extent (the intensity of the transition).¹

The reason for the choice of the three countries has been that, according to the better-known Hungarian scholars, these literatures can be treated as if they were of different quality, although the Hungarian and the Polish one share a common development pattern in several epochs.² As regards Polish and Slovenian literature, despite the fact that both of them belong to the Slavic family, there are closer relationships in the geographical region than that between these two nations. Namely, the orientation of the Slovenian intellectuals was always much more enthusiastic towards Prague than towards Warsaw. These three nations of similar social historical development, offering a fertile field for area studies—or, to be more precise, only a part of the Poles—existed for a long period of time within one and the same state. From the first partition of Poland in 1772, the Habsburg Empire, i.e., the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, was a common homeland for the Hungarians, the Slovenians, and the Poles of Galicia. It was during this time that Lwów (Lemberg) became a center for connections and mediators between Polish and Slovenian culture. For lack of time and space, we can only briefly refer to the outstanding figures of the lively tradition of Hungarian–Polish intellectual exchange. We cannot elaborate here on the role of the region of the river Mura either, although this geographical area has been the place for direct relations between Hungarians and Slovenians ever since the time of the Reformation. Due to the contrastive quality of our work, a lesser emphasis will be laid on the genetic relationship among the three literatures. Indeed, our approach supports exactly the kinds of research methods which concentrate rather on the inner resemblances between the life works than on the personal relationships of the authors.

¹ ZIOMEK J. *Epoki i formacje w dziejach literatury polskiej*: Pamiętnik Literacki 57 (1984), z. 4, 36.

² Cf. BOJTÁR E. „Az ember feljő...” A felvilágosodás és a romantika a közép- és kelet-európai irodalmakban. Budapest 1986; BOJTÁR E., *Kelet-Európa vagy Közép-Európa*. Budapest 1993; FRIED I. *Kelet- és Közép-Európa között*. Budapest 1986; FRIED I. *Utak és tévutak Kelet-Közép-Európa irodalmaiban*. Budapest 1989; BERKES T. (ed.): *Közép- és kelet-európai összehasonlító irodalomtörténet*. Budapest 2000.

We undertook the task of comparative periodization in an age when several schools of theory, following mostly in the footsteps of Hans Robert Jauss and René Wellek, question the *raison d'être* in writing literary histories. In this respect, it is worth noting what Ernő Kulcsár Szabó stresses in his *A magyar irodalom története 1945–1991* [A History of Hungarian Literature 1945–1991]:

... the horizon of the present never develops without a past, i.e., the way we can bridge the discrepancies between *historical* and *theoretical aspects* is to dismiss their individual omnipotence. For their opposition gets dissolved only if we follow the hermeneutical maxim according to which there is no **purely** historical method, just like there is no **purely** contemporary theoretical method either.³

A different opinion from the one above was voiced by Ziomek:

It may sound like a banal piece of truism, yet it is worth restating that every generation needs their own history of literature.⁴

Our train of thought permits us to make observations concerning the literary history writing of the three nations, too. Most probably, Marxist theory had the greatest influence of all in Hungary. It can be best seen in the Hungarian periodization that cultural historical and social historical views are combined, i.e., the fact that social and political events have been used as a basis to separate epochs of literary history. At the same time, Jože Pogačnik noteworthy writes in the preface to the first book of the latest edition of the three-volume history of Slovenian literature that periodization is carried out on the basis of literary styles, where it is the characteristic features of the literary works that stand in the center.⁵

In Anton Slodnjak's rather patriotic history of literature, the first epoch is the Middle Ages and the second epoch lasts right up until 1950. (The chapter on the third epoch was written by another author.) Similar to the rest, the chapter discussing the Middle Ages has a clumsy title: *The History of Oral and Written Linguistic Creation during the Period of the Impossibility of Slovenian National Integration*.⁶ The earliest Slovenian literary records, the text fragments discovered in Brižin (i.e., Freising), date back to earlier times than the first written records extant in the Hungarian or the Polish language. However, starting from the 14th century, in the latter two languages numerous texts were written and discovered in full while in Slovenian there are only fragments of texts available. **The Middle Ages**, as a period of literary history, is thus used only in the case of Polish and Hungarian literature. In these instances, its use is justified by the abundance of belletristic works in the 15th century or their wide thematic and poetic variety, together with their reception by contemporary audiences, as well

³ KULCSÁR SZ. E. Hogyan és mivégre írunk irodalomtörténetet az ezredvégen? In: *A magyar irodalom története 1945–1991*. Budapest 1994, 8.

⁴ ZIOMEK J. Metodologiczne problemy syntezy historycznoliterackiej. In: MARKIEWICZ H. – ŚLAWIŃSKI J. (eds): *Problemy metodologiczne współczesnego literaturoznawstwa*. Kraków 1976, 35.

⁵ POGAČNIK J. *Slovenska književnost*. Ljubljana 1998.

⁶ SLODNJAK A. *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva*. Klagenfurt 1968, 25.

as by translations of the Bible in manuscript form and the existence of a literary language fit for creating poetry, as well.

Slovenian publications represent a uniform view concerning the closing date of the Middle Ages. Jože Pogačnik's work mentioned earlier, together with another publication of his in Croatian, co-authored with Ivan Cesar (1991), as well as Janko Kos's school textbook, date the beginning of the epoch to the settlement of the Slovenians along the southern foothills of the Alps and the end of the Middle Ages to the 1550s–1560s.⁷ These dates mark the advance of Protestantism, which was so decisive in the development of the literary language, indicated by the publication of Primož Trubar's catechism and spelling-book, which were the first books ever to come out in Slovenian. According to Slovenian scholars, it was in the age of **Reformation** that the second attempt by Slovenians to become involved in the contemporary European cultural processes. The designation for the epoch can be explained through the lack of secular belletristic works, especially that of the narrative genres.

In Slovenian literary histories, unlike in Hungarian or Polish ones, the term **Renaissance**, at least in its French version, is not used. *Odrodzenie*, its verbatim translation, occurs even as the title of a university textbook in Poland.⁸ Its Slovenian equivalent is used by Slodnjak in the following title of a subchapter: *The Epoch of Religious Literature and the Beginnings of Efforts for a National Rebirth*. The term *preporod* means rebirth, and it is actually used in Slovenian and Croatian histories of literature, although as a more specific reference than the one by Slodnjak, designating a later epoch, otherwise known as the enlightenment.

The authors of all syntheses concerning literary history agree that, with the Poles and the Hungarians, the epochs of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance “blend” into one another, as literary historians identify the beginnings of the latter starting as early as the second half of the 15th century. Also, and not only because of the presence of literature in Latin, they discern the so-called humanist literature, which is missing in the case of the Slovenians. The Hungarians, although with lesser emphasis than the Slovenians do, even distinguish the literature of the Reformation, which is naturally present in the case of the Poles, too. The first book in the Polish language comes from 1513, while the first Hungarian ones printed in Cracow and Vienna date back to the 1630s. Hungarian books were printed in Hungary as early as 1541. These were copies of the translation of the *New Testament* into Hungarian. The earliest Slovenian books, which came out in 1550, were not too late when compared with their Polish and Hungarian counterparts, whereas the fully translated Slovenian version of the *Bible* (1584) was. Both in Poland and in Hungary, there existed copies of the *Bible* in their respective national vernaculars in the 15th century. What's more, these, or parts of them, were published several times in the 1550s and 1560s by both the Catholics

⁷ CESAR I. – KOS J. Slovenska književnost. Zagreb 1991; KOS J. Primerjalna zgodovina slovenske literature. Ljubljana 2001.

⁸ ZIOMEK J. Literatura odrodzenia. Warszawa 1999.

and the Protestants. The beginning of the literary epoch corresponding to the Renaissance in Slovenian literature is generally accepted to be the middle of the 16th century, while the Hungarian pieces unquestionably belonging to what can be termed the Renaissance from the aspect of poetics in the broader sense come from only two decades before. However, a significant portion of the latter is considered “genuine” secular writings, as well as the poetic works created in the second half of the century. While we can hardly rely upon comparative research findings on this issue, we are convinced that the features of the Renaissance had become dominant one or perhaps even two decades earlier in Polish literature than in its Hungarian counterpart.⁹ This view is also supported by the dates of birth of the authors and/or the dates of the printed publications of the first works (or those of their first literary attempts) of the authors who can be paralleled with each other in spiritual and artistic respects: Mikołaj Rej—1506, before 1543 and Gáspár Heltai—1510s, 1550, Jan Kochanowski—1530, around 1561 and Bálint Balassi—1554, around 1575.

István Nemeskürty dates the late, so-called manieristic, period of the Hungarian Renaissance between 1584 and 1641. The history of literature accepted by the Hungarian Academy pinpoints the starting date of the Baroque at around 1600 and identifies the “golden age” of the same as starting from the 1640s.¹⁰ By summing up the results of the Polish syntheses, we can state that the development of Polish letters in this epoch was ahead of the one in Hungary by a few decades, as there had been discernible features of the Baroque present there as early as the 1580s, and the fully developed **Baroque** style appeared in Poland around the 1620s. The development of the concurrent Slovenian letters suffered a serious setback as there were no books published in the national vernacular between 1615 and 1672. Most reference books would define the starting date for the epoch as the year 1630. In the Slovenian parts, the assisting force for the dissemination of the Reformation was the opposition to the German literary language, while the national idea and the intention to improve the national language were also embraced by the Counter-Reformation. Slodnjak remarks that the Catholic literature of the Counter-Reformation was encouraged by the Protestant books in Slovenian.¹¹ The victory of the Counter-Reformation is estimated to have occurred around 1600.

The controversial quality of the transition from the Renaissance into the Baroque could be best illustrated by the disputes over the assessment of Mikołaj Sep Szarzyński. Ziomek contends that “It wasn’t only that Szarzyński was acknowledged as the poet of the Baroque but the elements of the poetics of the Baroque were researched even in Krzycki’s works [i.e., before the 1540s —

⁹ VÁRNAI D. Ramy czasowe i główne tendencje w kształtowaniu się literatury renesansowej w Polsce i na Węgrzech. In: BIBOK K. et al. (ed.): *Cirill és Metód példáját követve... Tanulmányok H. Tóth Imre 70. születésnapjára*. Szeged 2002, 551–559.

¹⁰ NEMESKÜRTY I. *A magyar irodalom története 1000–1945*, 1. Budapest 1993; *A magyar irodalom története*, 1. Budapest 1964; KLANICZAY T. *A múlt nagy korszakai*. Budapest 1973. (Barokk kultúra – barokk irodalom).

¹¹ SLODNJAK A. op. cit., 46.

I. D. M.]. It is indeed impossible to make sense of the poetry (especially of the first half) of the 17th century without Szarzyński, yet it is equally futile to pigeonhole a poet as anyone's forerunner who was unsurpassable in his own artistic field. It would be more apt to highlight Sep's manierism."¹² Most of the scholars agree that the age of the Baroque in the time period specified above was ushered in partly by the ideology of the Counter-Reformation, partly by the appearance of the metaphysical poets, including Sep Szarzyński. Czesław Hernas contends that "The new poets [...] perceived life as passing away, as an episode opening up the road to eternal life, they appealed to the dualism inherent in human nature, which accepts as enduring only what is spiritual, and thus, the only value."¹³ Ziomek lists the formal consequences of this view of the world: "... virtuosity achieved in the Renaissance material, anti-naivety and anti-spontaneity, hermetism, endeavor for creating autonomous play of meanings, which invigorates the expressive function as opposed to the contemplation of the world, individual and self-centered piety close to mysticism."¹⁴ The above qualities are partially characteristic of Hungarian poetry, too, but are not observable in the less differentiated Slovenian one.

Nemeskürty, by quoting the poet János Rimay, discusses the artistic achievements of the latter in a chapter called "*This world is like a garden beaten by a storm of stones*"—*Late Renaissance, Manierism, and Preparations of the Baroque in Hungary*. We believe that Balassi's later works also display features of Manierism. His connections with Polish culture are well-known, he learned a great deal from Kochanowski's poetry.¹⁵ Furthermore, the Polish Catholic preacher, Piotr Skarga was a teacher and mentor of Hungarian preacher-writer Péter Pázmány in Cracow. Some of the Polish research scholars consider Skarga to have been a representative of the epoch of the Renaissance, while others think he was an author of the Baroque Age. For the purposes of periodization, it is quite revealing that in the case of Pázmány, who had an analogous role in Hungarian literature and in the intellectual life in general, there is no such uncertainty, although Nemeskürty very sensitively points out the features of Manierism that are apparent in Pázmány's works.¹⁶ A representative of the Slovenian Baroque, Janez Svetokriški was also a preacher, yet it should be emphasized that he lived later. His sermons were published between 1691 and 1707.

The different volumes of the great Polish literary historical synthesis discussing the end of the Baroque period and the beginning of the Enlightenment set at the 1840s. Jadwiga Sokołowska and Alina Nowicka-Jeżowa summarize the views on the late Baroque period, according to which the decline of the Baroque took place around 1763–1768, which was the beginning of the reign of the last Polish king and the time of the conservative plot of the nobility against the mon-

¹² ZIOMEK J. *Epoki i formacje*, 40–41.

¹³ HERNAS Cz. *Barok*. In *Literatura polska XX w.* Warszawa 2000, 382.

¹⁴ ZIOMEK J. *Renesans*. Warszawa 1996, 349.

¹⁵ ŚLASKI J. *Wokół literatury włoskiej, węgierskiej i polskiej w epoce renesansu*. Warszawa 1991, 80–116.

¹⁶ NEMESKÜRTY I. *op. cit.*, 188–189.

archy.¹⁷ The last chapter of the literary historical synthesis discussing Hungarian literature between 1600 and 1772, edited by Tibor Klaniczay is called *The Late Baroque (Rococo) Literature (c. 1740 – c. 1772)*. This chapter assesses the work of Kelemen Mikes.¹⁸ Nemeskürty also follows suit in his reference book.

In our opinion, Hungarian literature was late by one or two decades compared to Polish letters but, nowadays, the philosophy of the Enlightenment in Hungary is considered to have gained ground a few decades before than it was previously thought.¹⁹ Most scholars regard the closing events of the Baroque in Slovenia as related to the dissolution of the order of the Jesuits in 1773.

The emergence of Classicism, Sentimentalism, and Romanticism in the national literatures is regarded by the scholars as a relatively reliable benchmark for the purpose of evaluating how spiritual life kept abreast of the trends in the rest of Europe. This should not be viewed as a race or competition. What is normally compared in the given literatures in the Age of **Enlightenment** is the following aspects: How complete is the system of genres? What results have been achieved in the field of publishing grammar-books and dictionaries? What is the situation of the periodicals like? What responses have been given by the literature and the histrionic arts to the impulses from Europe? In what way did overall thinking about literature and the arts develop? Similar to Endre Bojtár, István Fried also ranks Polish literature among the so-called “complete” literatures: “It is a well-known fact that in the second half of the 18th century Polish literature established an almost complete system of genres, created a flowering field of journalism, in which even theoretical-esthetic [...] issues were discussed. A flourishing theatrical life also developed under the benevolent patronage of enlightened absolutism.” In the Hungarian academic synthesis, Hungarian literature of the age is seen as less differentiated than the Polish one.²⁰

The year 1764 is generally considered to be the starting date of the Enlightenment in Poland. It marks the beginning of the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski, a king who made the support of culture a part of his agenda. It was through his assistance that the periodical “Monitor” was founded and the first public theater was opened in 1765. The first generation of writers of the Enlightenment were influenced by the mentality advocated by the royal court. The first or most significant works by Adam Naruszewicz, Ignacy Krasicki, Stanisław Trembecki, and Franciszek Zabłocki were written in the 1770s. This time period coincides with what quite a few scholars consider the beginning of the Hungarian Enlightenment, i.e., with the publication of the most important writings by György Besse-

¹⁷ HERNAS Cz. Barok. Warszawa 1998; KLIMOWICZ M. Oświecenie. Warszawa 1998; SOKOŁOWSKA J. – NOWICKA-JEŻOWA A. Barok. In: MICHAŁOWSKA T. (ed.): Słownik literatury staropolskiej. Wrocław 1998, 93–94.

¹⁸ A magyar irodalom története, 2. (1600–1772). Budapest 1964.

¹⁹ MEZEI M. A magyar irodalom a felvilágosodás korában (1750–1790). In: Magyar kódex, 3. (1526–1790); SZEGEDY-MASZÁK M. A polgári társadalom korának művelődése. In: KÓSA L. (ed.): Magyar művelődéstörténet. Budapest 1998; BIRÓ F. A felvilágosodás korának magyar irodalma. Budapest 1994, 15–16.

²⁰ FRIED I. Utak és tévutak, 65.

nyei. An overlapping of the different trends can be seen though in the fact that the poem that qualifies for the manifesto of Classicism (Wacław Rzewuski: *O nauce wierszopiskiej*) was written in 1762, while the programmatic declaration for Rococo (Józef Szymanowski: *Listy o guście, czyli smaku*) in 1779, and the seminal study about Sentimentalism (Franciszek Karpiński: *O wymowie w prozie albo w wierszu*) in 1782. A similar example to illustrate the same phenomenon could be the lifework of the young Mihály Csokonai Vitéz in Hungary, in which the elements of Rococo, Classicism, and Sentimentalism were inseparably intertwined.

Co-authors Cesar and Pogačnik, enforcing a comprehensive Southern Slavic perspective, note the introduction to Marko Pohlin's 1768 grammar book, which was the manifesto of national revival.²¹ However, it is around 1750 that most reference books would put the commencement of the Enlightenment in Slovenia, characterized by the third Slovenian attempt to gain admission into the current European trends, occurring first of all in the fields of the dramatic arts and the dissemination of knowledge. The year 1790, when two comedies by Anton Tomaž Linhart were released, is also a notable date in the history of Slovenian Enlightenment. In these Rococo plays there is also some nationalistic didacticism present. The adaptations of German or French plays were also common practice in this period for Polish playwrights. The end date for the epoch is generally considered either 1830 or 1819, marking the years when Žiga Zois and Valentin Vodnik died. Zois, a disciple of the encyclopedists, was a collector of books and a literary translator, but he was also the first literary critic and a significant patron of the arts. Vodnik worked for the first Slovenian newspaper (*Lublanske novice*, 1797–1800). He published a collection of his own poems in 1806, which was the first collection of its kind in Slovenian literature. In contrast, let us refer here to the rich traditions of poetry already available at this time both in Hungary and in Poland.

According to some, the year 1795 in Hungarian and in Polish literature marks a line of demarcation between periods, while others believe that it meant a huge paradigm shift. Due to its third partition, Poland ceased to exist for more than a century. Several of the scholars recognize this as the end of the Enlightenment, contending that from this point on literature served the cause of retaining national independence which, as a matter of course, introduced a new artistic quality, manifesting itself in the appearance of Romanticism. It is worth noting that just recently Jerzy Snopek gave the following title to the last chapter of his literary historical summary: *The Late Period of Enlightenment 1795–1815*.²² The periodization in the reference book discussing the age of Romanticism in detail is utterly different from this. Its first part is called *Classicism and Sentimentalism after the Third Partition (1795–1830)*, while its second part discusses *Romanticism* developed in the 1820s.²³ The events of 1795 undoubtedly exerted a strong influence on literature. The new line of demarcation can also be demon-

²¹ CESAR I. – POGAČNIK J. op. cit., 51.

²² SNOPEK J. *Oświecenie*. Warszawa 2000.

²³ WITKOWSKA A. – PRZYBYLSKI R. *Romantyzm*. Warszawa 1997.

strated in the individual artistic careers. For example, it meant the endpoint in the careers of some leading authors (like Krasicki) and it also marked the expansion or consummation of the life work of a generation of writers born mostly at the beginning of the 1770s. We, however, would be more willing to accept the view set forth in the appropriate volume of the new, small-size Polish history of literature, which places the age of Romanticism between 1822 and 1863.²⁴

The differing opinions on the periodization, together with those concerning the denominations of the individual literary historical periods, seem to illustrate that both the Polish and the Hungarian periods of the Enlightenment (including, first of all, Classicism) and those of Romanticism “overlap one another.” A crucial part in this phenomenon was played by the encounter between romantic themes and the national sentiments. The section called *From the Enlightenment to Romanticism (1795–1825)* in the third volume of *The History of Hungarian Literature* elaborates on *The Second Wave of Classicism*, while the chapter called *From Classicism to National Romanticism* discusses the life work of Károly Kisfaludy, Ferenc Kölcsey, and Mihály Vörösmarty.

By applying Ziomek’s terms cited above, it is possible to assume that during an examination of the development of Polish and Hungarian Romanticism it is worth paying attention to the length of the transitions between the literary epochs, i.e., to the speed of the changes. The breakthrough in Polish literature is related to Adam Mickiewicz’s 1822 collection. As a critic, back in 1817, Kölcsey condemned the lack of “emotional many-sidedness” in the poetry of Dániel Berzsenyi, considered still a classicist. On the introduction of the new themes into poetry, Zoltán Rohonyi writes the following:

Thus it is clear that the emergence of Hungarian Romanticism can be perceived as the outcome of the peculiar historically-ideologically based contemplation, maturing by the middle of the 1810s, through the course of which the *inner conditions* of artistic creation change so essentially that only the romantic literary quality, breaking the system of principles of classicism from the inside, remains the only way for expressing the new awareness of life.²⁵

When we survey the histories of the literatures of the three nations, we find that it was exactly the period of Romanticism that canceled out the earlier phase shifts. There can also be Central-Eastern European and pan-European events and processes in the background that are responsible for the synchronicity discernible in the immanent traits of literary and extra-literary phenomena.

In the part of Slodnjak’s history of literature addressing the topic of the second epoch, we find the following chapter title: *The Victory of Poetic Creation over Didactic Literature*. The work devotes significant attention to Matija Čop, but also assesses Prešeren’s emergence as the beginning of an exceptional period, reminding us of Ziomek’s arguments concerning the intensity of literary historical junctures. Prešeren’s importance can also be demonstrated by emphasizing that he had no equals among the belletrists of the age on the one hand

²⁴ SIWICKA D. *Romantyzm 1822–1865*. Warszawa 1995.

²⁵ ROHONYI Z. *A magyar romantika kezdetei*. București 1975, 15.

while, on the other hand, his whole life's work was achieved already in the spirit of Romanticism. Silvo Fatur, in his history of literature actually calls the period of Romanticism *Prešeren's Period*. A similar opinion can be found in what Fried states about the literature creating role of the Slovenian poet.²⁶ He is the only belletrist representing the period, in an outdated Hungarian work, that appraises only the realist's efforts as of the 19th century.²⁷ The year 1830, generally considered to be the starting date of Romanticism, marks the publication of the periodical "Kranjska čbelica". It was Prešeren's oeuvre that represented the highest point in the debates, the outcome of which determined Slovenian spirituality, and set the course for national endeavors, resulting in a separate Slovenian path of development in the community of Southern Slavs.

The beginnings of Polish and Hungarian Romanticism can be estimated to have occurred almost at the same time, but the Polish romantic breakthrough happened faster because the Hungarian authors were much slower in parting with classicistic poetics. The literary artists brought up on earlier traditions in Poland and Hungary were all born around 1780, while those who found their voice as romanticists (Mickiewicz, Vörösmarty) were born around the turn of the century. The birth dates of several authors seem to suggest that Polish Romanticism became a dominant trend somewhat earlier than its Hungarian equivalent. Juliusz Słowacki, Zygmunt Krasiński, and Józef Ignacy Kraszewski were all a few years older than József Eötvös, Zsigmond Kemény, and János Arany. The starting date of Romanticism in both literatures was around 1818 and 1825 respectively.

According to the reference works, the period of time covered by the three Romanticisms was not more than three or four decades. A huge loss for the Slovenian romantic movement and for the Prešeren–Čop circle, oriented towards Vienna and Graz, was the death of Polish-born Emil Korytko (1839), who mediated between Polish culture and the Slovenian artists. The Croatian-language history of Slovenian literature and Pogačnik agree on an 1854 landmark for the new epoch, highlighting the importance of the formation of the Mohorjeva družba society (1853). Slodnjak mentions the development of narrative prose genres in the direction of realism and the beginnings of realistic drama as of 1850. Kos inserts a chapter called *The Period between Romanticism and Realism* without specifying the exact temporal boundaries for it.

There is a fairly unanimous consensus concerning the closing date of the period, which is 1863–1864, the years of the last anti-Russian war of independence that was put down. The Hungarian experts on periodization consider the end of the epoch to be around 1849, the year of the collapse of the war for independence from Austria, yet they do not call it Romanticism. At the same time, they emphasize the significance of the trend of Romanticism in the works of numerous authors up until 1867, the birth of the Monarchy. They are uncertain about the poetry of

²⁶ FATUR S. Slovenska leposlovna književnost. Maribor 1992; FRIED I. France Prešeren és az európai romantika. In: Utak és tévutak, 260–273.

²⁷ KARIG S. (ed.): A szlovén irodalom kistükre. Budapest 1973.

Sándor Petőfi, which to this day hardly ever gets labeled as “romantic.” The third volume of the synthesis produced by the academy discusses it in the chapter called *From Romanticism to Critical Realism and Populism (1841–1849)*. This clearly demonstrates that for the Hungarian research of literature, unlike for the Polish, Yugoslav, or Slovenian ones, Romanticism was almost shameful. Evidently, because of the heavy influence of Marxism, the proper thing to do was to try and prove that elements of socially critical realism were present and became dominant at a very early stage. For this reason, the authors of the fourth volume of the series, which assesses the literature of the time period 1849–1905, decided to establish a basis for classification which was to identify the world-view of the writers as coming directly from their place in the social hierarchy. In the chapters called *The Populist-National Trend* and *The Liberal-Aristocratic Trend*, they keep referring to an amalgamation of Romanticism and Realism. What’s more, in the section about the period before 1867 they include the works of Arany and Kemény, writers who were active from the 1840s until the end of their lives and, in a chapter called *The Trend of Romanticism: Romanticism and Realism*, they cover the novels of Mór Jókai and the plays of Imre Madách.²⁸ The 1849 dividing line is also used, yet without the above pigeonholing, in Nemeskürty’s history of literature and even in a more recent university textbook. The same view is reflected in Károly Horváth’s collection of studies, despite the fact that he has compared Hungarian and Polish literary issues.²⁹

In the wake of the political events of the 1840s at home and in the rest of Europe, there were quick changes happening in Polish literature, too. With one exception, the life cycles or artistic careers of their writers in French exile had come to an end. The only posthumously acknowledged Cyprian Kamil Norwid, whose achievement brought innovation to his nation’s literature, is a difficult problem for scholars of periodization since, at best, only his works produced before 1863 can be characterized as romantic. In the Polish regions under foreign rule, Romanticism still remained the dominant trend, although Realism also gained some further ground.

There is a great deal of uncertainty concerning the shorter second half of the 19th century in the case of Hungarian and Slovenian literature. There are significant differences in the naming of the epoch. According to volume four of the Hungarian synthesis of the academy, the decade after 1867 and the last quarter of the century is not the epoch of realism but two periods of *The Differentiation of National-Bourgeois Literature*. The volume notes the presence of **Realism** only in the narrative prose fiction of the last quarter of the century. The writers included are Kálmán Mikszáth and, surprisingly, in the same chapter, Sándor Bródy, Zoltán Ambrus, and Géza Gárdonyi, who were all much younger. Because it

²⁸ A magyar irodalom története, 4. Budapest, 1965. 59–66, 96–152, 243–270, 281–329, 330–361.

²⁹ S. VARGA P. (ed.): A magyar irodalom története 1849-től 1905-ig. Debrecen 1998; HORVÁTH K. A romantika értékrendszere. Budapest 1997, mainly 17–31; HORVÁTH K. A műfajok problémája a klasszicizmus és a romantika korában a lengyel és a magyar irodalomban. In: CSAPLÁROS I. et al. (eds): Tanulmányok a lengyel-magyar kapcsolatok köréből. Budapest 1969, 331–374.

considers the literary production of the period ending at the turn of the century (actually, in 1905) to be extremely substantial and varied, the book tries to render the overlapping life works, especially in drama and poetry, with the help of new terms and notions. These include Neoromanticism, Naturalism, Secessionism (or Sezessionism), and Pre-Symbolism, and even Romanticism with prose. It is even more difficult to explain why Gyula Reviczky is included with János Vajda, who almost thirty years his senior. Nemeskürty does not write about the age of Realism either, and the basis for his periodization is political history.

Mikszáth, no matter how late in his life he became a belletrist out of his journalistic career, is the contemporary of the Polish writers Bolesław Prus and Henryk Sienkiewicz, whose careers also had the same pattern. In a university textbook published in the 1980s in Cracow we still find a chapter called *Realism and Naturalism*.³⁰ In all the rest of the Polish surveys, the name of the period between 1864 and 1890 is **Positivism**, through which the emphasis falls on the philosophical or ideological background of the realistic efforts. Naturalism is also considered important. What they do not seem to be concerned about, however, is the fact that the above and other writers produced literary works in the following epoch, too. Maybe they also did that in a novel fashion, therefore, the two epochs again “overlap one another”. Henryk Markiewicz, in a more recent publication than his previous textbook, includes a discussion of Gabriela Zapolska, which is similar to the treatment of the corresponding volume of the small-size history of literature—in the same way as the volume on the next epoch by Artur Hutnikiewicz does.³¹

A more thorough analysis of Slovenian literature would be required in order to be able to properly evaluate the relatively early closure of the epoch of Romanticism (as compared to the case of Hungarian and Polish literature). The sources authored by Pogačnik and Slodnjak expressly denote the time period between 1850 (or 1854) and 1892 as the epoch of Realism. The same is discussed by Fatur in two chapters, while including the same authors as the previous volumes. Two of the figures deserving a detailed assessment in the chapter called *Midcentury Movements* are Fran Levstik and Janez Trdina. At the end of the chapter titled *Decades of Differentiation*, he lists three naturalistic writers, among whom Lojz Kraigher was active for the longest time—he died in 1959. With the exception of these writers, the author discusses the realists, among whom we should note here the author of the first Slovenian novel (1866), Josip Jurčič, the poet Simon Gregorčič, and the playwright Fran Saležski Finžgar. We can clearly see that some Slovenian “realists” were fairly active during the turn of the century, and even afterwards.

The Slovenian reference books share the view that a new epoch started as of the 1890s. Slodnjak’s book, which we have alluded to several times before, is an

³⁰ STĘPIEŃ M. – WILKOŃ A. *Historia literatury polskiej w zarysie*, 1–2. Kraków 1989.

³¹ MARKIEWICZ H. *Literatura pozytywizmu*. Warszawa 1989; MARKIEWICZ H. *Pozytywizm*. Warszawa 1999; BORKOWSKA G. *Pozytywiści i inni*. Warszawa 1996, 131–132; HUTNIKIEWICZ A. *Młoda Polska*. Warszawa 1997.

exception only in the sense that it discusses *moderna*, i.e., **Modernism**, as just one of the phenomena of the period in review. Nevertheless, the corresponding chapter of his book has a telling title: *The Intrusion of New Literary Tendencies and Their Influence in Poetry, Prose Fiction, and Drama 1896–1918*.³² The author marks Naturalism, confined in his opinion to the years 1895–1900, by the terms “consistent realism” and “new trend” or “new current”. The first two collections of Ivan Cankar display features of Naturalism, yet Cankar’s orientation points towards Symbolism as beginning in 1900. Among the authors influencing his writing, the Polish Stanisław Przybyszewski is noted, whose works he knew well. During his short life, Cankar tried his hands at almost all the contemporary trends. Thus, Slodnjak suggests, Slovenian Naturalism and Modernism are also connected in several respects. The artistic careers of Dragotin Kette and Josip Murn reached their end towards the turn of the century, unlike that of Oton Zupančič, who was the fourth outstanding representative of Modernism. The reference books in general also cover those authors of the epoch whose names we have referred to earlier, in connection with Realism.

The Croatian-language literary history book cited above places the epoch of Slovenian Modernism between 1892 and 1918, with the comment that its chief characteristic is the following: in literature it was this epoch that brought along the victory of esthetic viewpoints over social ones, yet, in Slovenian intellectual life, the authors still retained their belief in the social mission of literature.³³ The source considers Symbolism and Impressionism as the two main trends.

It is also these trends, along with the expansion of estheticism, that characterizes Polish and Hungarian literature. Polish literary historians, too, unlike their Hungarian colleagues, have long made a sharp distinction about the period between 1890 and 1918. Following a western example, it is named *Młoda Polska*, or **Young Poland**, after a series of articles published in 1898. In the 1950s and 1960s, Kazimierz Wyka picked the term *modernizm*, while Julian Krzyżanowski opted for *neoromantyzm* as labels in their respective books. An argument in support of this could be that the majority of the most important figures were born in the 1860s and 1870s, and their artistic careers reached their endpoint in the 1920s at the latest. These were the poets Jan Kasprowicz and Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, prose writers Stefan Żeromski and Władysław Reymont, and playwrights Stanisław Wyspiański and Tadeusz Miciński. It was only Tomasz Burek who considered the end of the epoch to be around 1905, the time of the Russian revolution which had a direct influence on the Poles. Nevertheless, all the literary historians noticed this temporal boundary. More recently, the authors of the two-volume small-size Polish literary history believed that the epoch was closed by WWI, which dividing line is but a temporal boundary in the opinion of the majority.³⁴

³² SŁODNJAK A. op. cit. 254–367.

³³ CESAR I. – POGAČNIK J. op. cit., 256.

³⁴ BUREK T. 1905, nie 1918. In *Problemy literatury polskiej lat 1890–1939*, I. Warszawa 1972, 77–105; TOMKOWSKI J. *Młoda Polska*. Warszawa 2001; NASIŁOWSKA A. *Trzydziestolecie 1914–1944*. Warszawa 1995.

As we have mentioned earlier, it is not customary in the Hungarian field of literary history to clearly demarcate the epoch starting around 1890. Instead, a shorter time period is identified. There are no terms similar to the Polish or Slovenian ones available. Even Nemeskürty, who distinguishes the short, new epoch between 1884 and 1906, and the new textbook mentioned above, are no genuine exceptions. Although they note the appearance of the poet Jenő Komjáthy and that of the new generation of writers who were born around the 1860s, they also consider Mikszáth to be a representative of this epoch. Emphasizing how slow literary historians are about changing their views, Snopek argues succinctly:

The literature of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century is still not treated as a unified whole. The period lasting until 1906 appears in the history of Hungarian literature as an epoch [...] without a definite image of its own. The evaluation of contemporary creative arts is also negative. There are features of inferior imitation discovered in it. [...] the richness of events and happenings in the period starting from about 1906 are the reasons for the fact that Hungarian literary historians do not have an overall unified vision of the epoch of the Hungarian version of Modernism [...] They did not realize that the post-1906 literature is connected to the literature of the epoch between 1890 and 1906, or [...] they did not see the proper significance of this relationship.³⁵

The Hungarian literary historical syntheses uniformly identify the beginning of the epoch without a label of a literary historical origin with the name of Endre Ady and with the starting of the influential periodical “Nyugat” [West]. This can be explained partly by the fact that the art of this great figure of poetry matured in this period and, mostly due to his initiative, there was a growing interest present in the social issues cropping up in literature (which, by the way, also occurred in the post-1905 period of Polish literature). Another reason might be that this was also acceptable for the criteria of Marxist literary history writing. Nevertheless, we certainly consider it noteworthy that in the epoch that lasted until 1918 (or, according to Nemeskürty, until the “mutilation” of Hungary in 1920), which ushered in a formal revival of Hungarian literature, there were two waves of writers distinguishable. Gyula Krúdy, Ferenc Molnár, and Zsigmond Móricz were born in the 1870s, while Mihály Babits and Dezső Kosztolányi were born in the 1880s. Together with their slightly older fellow-writers, they can be considered the crucial figures of the post-WWI literature, too. Out of these two generational waves, only the first one has an equivalent in contemporary Polish and Slovenian letters.

Understandably, it was not they who became the daring innovators of the **literature after 1919**. What’s more, the avantgarde tendencies also played a more significant role in Polish and Slovenian literatures than in the Hungarian one. Neither in Hungarian literature, nor in Polish literature, is there such a term for the new epoch that would come from the name of a trend, a style, or an ideology. Both in vol. 6 of the Hungarian academic synthesis and in Nemeskürty’s *Years in Shackles*, the dates of social history (1919/1920–1945) are used.

³⁵ SNOPEK J. A századforduló irodalma Lengyelországban és Magyarországon. In: BALOGH M. et al. (eds): *Áttűnések*. Budapest 1992, 168–169.

The Poles have used the expressions *dwudziestolecie* or *dwudziestolecie międzywojenne* referring to the two decades (1918/1919–1939) between the world wars. Krzyżanowski ventured to call the epoch inter-war *Neo-Realism* (*neorealizm międzywojnia*) while, more recently, an attempt has been made for establishing 1914 as the starting date.³⁶ Among the main Polish representatives of this new kind of literature (Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Julian Tuwim, Julian Przyboś, Witold Gombrowicz), there are more elderly authors (born at the end of the 19th century) than the artists responsible for the image of Hungarian literature (Tibor Déry, Sándor Márai, László Németh, Gyula Illyés, Attila József), who were less keen to introduce formal innovations.

Similarly to avantgarde tendencies elsewhere, Hungarian expressionism can hardly boast of other lasting products than the life work of Lajos Kassák. The Poles also have only Józef Wittlin and Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski as parts of the national literary canon. At the same time, **Expressionism** in Slovenian literature (1918–1930) means a separate individual epoch. Through this, the conclusion that can be reached on the basis of the periodization in reference books also indicates that it was Expressionism that was the strongest of all innovative trends. Its representative is Srečko Kosovel, who tried his hands at almost all the other tendencies. In the Slovenian version of expressionism, we can find the leftist Tone Seliškar, as well as the New-Catholic Anton Vodnik. No such importance is attached to one single trend in contemporary Hungarian or Slovenian literatures.

Social Realism (1930–1952) seems to be a Slovenian phenomenon and literary historical concept. The trend or, rather, creative view, which belongs to left-wing writers, can be assessed the following way: the task of the authors is to portray the contradictory relationship between man and his social environment. Its practitioners attach a social role to arts, yet they reject tendentiousness in art, and they combine the scientific examination of issues with high-level esthetic standards. The representative prose writer of the trend is Miško Kranjec from the region of the river Mura, who happens to include a number of Hungarian references in his novels.

A more thorough comparison with Slovenian literature might produce new results in the writing of Polish literary histories. The latter identifies a new period in the epoch around 1932: a period of intensifying social interest and realistic tendencies. The application of the term *Neo-Realism* is not incidental at all. What's more, its meaning can also be worth considering for Hungarian scholars, too—and not only as a reference to the so-called popular writers. Comparative periodization is all the more difficult because the epoch ends in 1939 in Poland, in 1941 in Slovenia, and in 1945 in Hungary. Therefore, our analysis is also sketchier, and we do not venture further ahead in chronology.

As regards the lines of demarcation indicating the beginning and the end of the individual epochs, and the difficulty in drawing them, it seems that the

³⁶ KRZYŻANOWSKI J. *Dzieje literatury polskiej*. Warszawa 1969; NASIŁOWSKA A. *Trzydzieciestolecie 1914–1944*. Warszawa 1995.

firmest consensus of the three concerning this is in Slovenia. At the same time, this says a lot about the character of the literature of the most western Slavic country. We assume, that in this literature there was not such a great extent of overlapping between the epochs as in Polish or Hungarian literature. Also, their iconoclastic authors, who would have hurried the paradigm shifts of literary processes, have been few and far between, which again makes periodization more difficult. It is not certain though that the reason for this lies in the more differentiated or wealthier quality of Polish or Hungarian literature.

It is in Hungarian literature that we find that extra-literary facts used as a basis for periodization most frequently. This can be demonstrated through several designations of the epochs. The development of Hungarian literature sped up with the advent of the Enlightenment, when it made up for the same kind of “delay” that Slovenian literature had to come to terms with once. Darasz writes the following about the role of the modernists:

Due to the concerted effort of the generation, the gap that used to be present between Slovenia and the most advanced European countries got significantly smaller. As of this point in time, Slovenian literature [...] has entered the the pan-European scheme of literary diachrony, displaying its own cultural and national identity.³⁷

This could be achieved despite the absence of independence. Drago Jančar’s opinion in his essay called *Terra incognita* can be equally applied to the other two literatures, too:

Slovenian literature followed the European trends, since at least until 1918 this part of Europe can be considered a uniform intellectual field. The ideas and the cultural goods flowed freely and naturally like the air, although they must have arrived here with some provincial delay.³⁸

Even the relatively large amount of Polish, Hungarian, and Slovenian publications fall short of providing help with the work of setting more unanimously acceptable demarcation lines for several epochs. The comparison of the three literatures here could but point out the questions that need further investigation. Finding the right answers to these questions could be very helpful in a more exact periodization, not only in the sense that Ziomek mentions, but also in the respect that literary historians (especially the Polish ones) should not consider it evident that certain epochs “overlap with one another”, and also that others (the Hungarians and the Slovenians) should be more resolute in drawing the lines for the demarcation of certain periods.

³⁷ DARASZ Z. Problemy autoidentyfikacji kulturowej i narodowej w literaturze słoweńskiej. Katowice 1995, 134–135; cf. BOKOR J. – SZIJÁRTÓ I. (eds) Szomszédos népek – szomszédos kultúrák. Maribor–Szombathely 2001, 9–29. (The studies of LUKÁCS I. and FRIED I.)

³⁸ Az eltört korszó. Válogatás a legújabb szlovén esszéirodalomból. Pécs 1992, 57.