

The handbook, as was its intention, presents Hungarian literature primarily to foreigners. Its various merits show that it may be extremely useful for foreign readers. The book contains well-chosen, basic information about individual writers and their works. There is a well-struck balance among the different parts, those offering introduction and information, and those furnishing interpretation, and this makes the book worthwhile reading. It contains the newest results of Hungarian literary science, as well as the most recent achievements of research in literary history (facts) and literary theory (methodological approaches). The work also contains quotations which make it possible to establish direct contact with literary reality. Those who wish to know Hungarian literature better receive great assistance from the parallels, analogies and real connections drawn in the book between Hungarian literature on the one hand and foreign literary works, on the other.

The work ends with a valuable bibliography containing the following: bibliographies, biographical dictionaries and literary encyclopaedias, works of literary history containing summaries of Hungarian literary works, literary anthologies, basic works on literary history (discussing the individual eras and trends, literary genres, literary language, stylistics, prosody and translation, history of books, libraries, printing and press, connections of Hungarian literature with other literatures, the works of the most outstanding researchers from the post-war era) and works on the most important writers. In the bibliography a significant place has been allotted to publications in foreign languages as well as to writing published abroad. These show the vivid interest with which Hungarian literature is followed outside the country, especially today. Another supplement contains portraits of about forty Hungarian writers.

Taking several viewpoints into account, the synthesis of literary history presented here well deserves to be known abroad. As presented it is available in three languages. It is hoped that it will also appear soon in other languages.

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Görömbei, András  
**A csehszlovákiai magyar irodalom 1945–1980**  
(Czechoslovakian Hungarian literature 1945—1980)

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(Irodalomtörténeti Könyvtár, vol. 37.) 74,— Ft

Czechoslovak Hungarian literature\* (i.e. Hungarian literature in Czechoslovakia) as a phenomenon and concept has existed since 1918. Although the phrase might seem to speak for itself, some explanation might not be entirely out of place.

In accordance with the most widely spread model existing to common knowledge, a given national literature corresponds to the literature of a given country. This, however, occurs less frequently in its purest form than one might believe. Looking at the map of Europe, it is immediately apparent that over the ocean from Portuguese literature we find Brazilian literature, the language of which is also Portuguese, but which is otherwise completely different; literatures in the Spanish language flourish outside Spain across the whole of Latin America; literature in English is not only cultivated in England, but also in the USA, Canada, and Australia; people write in German not only in the two Germanies but also in Austria and Switzerland, etc. And this creates a diversity of overlapping areas and continuous possibilities of transition—one needs only

\*Throughout in the review we keep this word-by-word translation of the Hungarian book title. For an explanation see the full text of the review. (Editorial remark.)

consider the American—English T. S. Eliot. Language, as we know, is not the only significant factor here, but it does play a decisive role in many ways. To take the point a stage further, in Switzerland there are at least three literatures, none of which can properly be called a minority literature. Czechoslovakian Hungarian literature, on the other hand, definitely is a minority literature.

Naturally, minority literatures are also diverse. As no two leaves on the same tree are ever exactly alike, no two individual literary works, nor two distinct minority literatures can ever be considered entirely analogous, or to stem from the same situation. It would be futile to try comparing Canadian French literature to Belgian French Literature, Finnish Swedish to Czechoslovakian Polish Literature, and among all these Romanian, Yugoslavian and Ruthenian Hungarian to Czechoslovakian Hungarian (this itself being a complex formula as only in Slovakia do Hungarians live in numbers amounting to several hundred thousand and this literature is called Czechoslovakian not only "for the purposes of order" but also on account of its significant Czech affinities, extensions and fragments). Thus this current study—while, like any scientific work, abounding in propositions open to generalisation—constitutes a moment of the research of the unrepeatable, which only occasionally, and for good reason, resorts to the formulation of typological overviews.

This is not the first work of a comprehensive nature to have been produced concerning the subject under present discussion. Even if we choose to neglect certain older studies, mention must certainly be made (and Görömbei does so) of Lajos Turczel's fundamental work *Két kor mezsgyéjén* (On the Border of Two Ages) which offers more than a specifically literature survey of the conditions and problems of the development of Czechoslovakian Hungarian literature between the two World Wars. Several volumes of studies by Sándor Csanda also point to a process of synthesis such as, *Az első nemzedék* (The first generation, Bratislava, 1968), which, in Görömbei's view, as a separate gain, "makes up for the lack of a Czechoslovakian Hungarian Literary encyclopaedia". Czechoslovakian Hungarian literature has never been lacking in self-contemplation on the contrary, there has perhaps been too much of it: the works of Edgár Balogh, László Dobossy, László Sziklay, Rezső Szalatnai and László Sándor in this area cannot be overlooked. And it must be added here that soon after the publication of Görömbei's book another publication appeared, also comprehensive in character, the title of which also indicates its claims to a summarizing, if not synthesizing, approach: *Madarská literatura v Československu* (Hungarian literature in Czechoslovakia, Bratislava, 1983). In actual fact this is also a self-contemplation since it mostly contains the selected studies of Slovakian Hungarian authors and at the time of writing, must be considered a novelty. This volume also mainly concentrates on the period after 1948.

After all this it may be stated that it was the pen of András Görömbei, an excellent literary historian from Debrecen, that produced the first predominantly literary summary of the material.

Görömbei divides his material into three basic chapters, each more extensive than the last. The subject of the first chapter is "antecedents, and history", that of the second is "the start", and that of the third is "development". We assume that it is primarily the first chapter that will attract interest beyond the attention of specialists in the field concerned. It is here that Görömbei, with a completeness seldom encountered, sets forth his basic postulations, and foremost among them the following: "It is a common basic feature of minority-national literatures that, through their language, culture, older historical traditions and partly through their emotional links, they are connected to the Hungarian national consciousness and culture, while the state, financial and partly cultural framework of their existence is defined by their country, the state they live in" (p. 5.). Using a term that has become general in our age, Görömbei calls this phenomenon "dual linkage" (*kettős kötődés*); in the foreword of the volume of studies in Slovak mentioned above (the authors of which are Karol Rosenbaum and Rudolf Chmel), we find the expression "dual patriotism" ( *dvojité vlastenectvo*), and this is important in indicating the proximity of the viewpoints as regards the main question, and eliminates all unnecessary misunderstandings concerning details of lesser significance. But in Görömbei's introductory chapter we also find other concepts of key importance, which are almost inseparable today from the concept of Czechoslovakian Hungarian literature, even if at times they are the sites of debate and discussion. These include "the bridge role", the mission to mediate between Czech and

Slovak culture on the one hand and Hungarian literature in Hungary on the other; and also "vox humana", the general human over-view of the community in minority in relation to its nationality grievances. *Vox humana* is mentioned, and not without due cause, with reference to Zoltán Fábry, since with him humanism was a "genre" just like anti-fascism; but the term in its general usage in all probability dates back to ancient times, and it is the task of philologists to reveal how it took root in Czechoslovakian Hungarian literature. (Volumes with the title "vox humana" were published by Sándor Márai in 1921 and by Dezső Győry in 1940). Furthermore, there can be no essential differences in opinion concerning the following proposition: the bourgeois democratic state of affairs in Czechoslovakia between the two World Wars represented a more progressive, more bearable system than that of Hungary at the time Horthy was Governor, no matter how fiercely they were criticised by the Czechoslovakian left-wing opposition, and the advantages of these were enjoyed by the Hungarian population too, even if their complaints in other respect were justified.

The above are valid truths and are revealed in Görömbei's book in a moderate and convincing manner. Of course, certain of his other views may not count on common approval; it is the consequence of the nature of such topics that they are not looked at from the same angle on both sides of the border. Here, for example, we have in mind the characterization of the Czechoslovakian "national and democratic revolution", where the author was faced by a difficulty similar to that encountered by the historian dealing with the Hungarian revolution of 1848: tracing this single line, it is extremely difficult to arrive at a comprehensive view which might encompass all the different angles. In a work of this kind, however, one may not even think of neglecting these matters by relying on some kind of immanently literary viewpoint. András Görömbei writes without unnecessary truisms, in a placid manner characterized by the proper degree of historical reconciliation; this much at least must be allowed to say about these difficult questions of our age in order to be able to argue with appropriate weight against those who stress more than is inevitably necessary.

It is not necessary here, and would not be easy either, to give a detailed analysis of the two chapters concentrating on the meaningful material which follow the first, theoretical part. The primary reason for this is that Czechoslovakian Hungarian literature has so far come up with few literary accomplishments which would even stand up to the standards of literature in Hungary; consequently, there are few who keep track of them. Nor will comparison with Transylvanian Hungarian literature, as is common knowledge, yield a favourable result. It is a truism to mention in this connection that local and historical factors exercised a favourable influence on the creation of an awakening publicism of a wide horizon and a progressive spirit, but this could not make up for talented writers who were either lost or emigrated. Zoltán Fábry, the "hermit of Stósz", who is appreciated as the most outstanding figure beyond the borders of the country, was also an essayist and publicist. But it must be added that it is precisely Görömbei's book that does a great deal in order to eliminate the part prejudice plays in this belief.

Like his forerunners, Görömbei also uses the terms first, second and third generations, only in a slightly different manner; as, for example, it is customary to speak about the generations of the journal *Nyugat* in Hungarian literature, and not only because here the first generation can be considered to have started from 1918 at the earliest (that is how Sándor Csanda, and others have dated it). In Görömbei's book, however, the word generation is rather used to denote an era: he dates the first era from 1945 or rather from 1948, and the rest are discussed in two large waves beginning from the years of "development" (the launching of the only literary journal of great importance, *Irodalmi Szemle*. Continuity—within the individual subchapters—is represented by Zoltán Fábry, Viktor Egri, Béla Szabó, Ibolya L. Kiss and Vilmos Csontos; the younger representatives of the first generation have received a separate common sub-chapter. One more caesura is inserted by the author between the 'sixties and the 'seventies. Here he analyses, among others, the careers of the "late starters", including Olivér Rácz, Teréz Dávid and Katalin Ordódy. (But here, too, the criterium is not age but era, since Teréz Dávid was born in 1906 and Katalin Ordódy in 1920!) Furthermore, still under the label of the first generation, and perhaps, to a certain extent, "in the sequence of development", he discusses Tibor Babi, Árpád Ozsvald and József Mács, then László Dobos and Gyula Duba. Of the second generation, the life and works of Árpád Tözsér, László Cselényi, Lajos Zs. Nagy and

Sándor Gál have been considered in one chapter; a further chapter being devoted to the cultivators of literary science (Lajos Turczel, Sándor Csanda, Péter Rákos, László Koncsol, Tibor Zsilka, Zsigmond Zalabai). And finally, two memorable anthologies, *Egyszemű éjszaka* (The one-eyed night) and *Fekete szél* (Black wind), treat the lyrical works of László Tóth, Imre Varga, Ferenc Kulcsár, Anikó Mikola and the prose works of József Bereck, Magda Kovács and János Kövesdi. Those who do not agree with the author on the question of the selection of names should bear in mind that they do not necessarily imply a judgement of value but rather represent proportions of "presence": their choice may be individual in Görömbei's book (just as in the works of others) but not personal, and not unverifiably subjective. In our view, it all depends on the approval of experts. One might, of course, add the names of those who have been "present", even if not by virtue of their prolificity, but because of their depth, thoroughness, and unobtrusive but effective contribution to the literary process (here I have in mind teachers, editors, etc.). It might also be the case that some would entertain doubts as to the importance attached to other names in the book; while still further names have gained significance in the period of time between the book's completion and its publication. But it is not names with which we are concerned here.\* András Görömbei has written a good book and has managed to do by applying his thorough knowledge, wide intellectual horizon, erudition, susceptibility to subtleties and, last but not least, his clear style trained in other areas onto this field as "a well-tested warrior". His book serves as methodological proof that minority literatures can be successfully approached not from the angle of the minority, but from that of literature itself. "The responsibility of the nation", "the claim to national self-knowledge", emphasized by András Görömbei in his dynamic epilogue, may, in all probability, not be blamed, but nor can the true hope the author also mentions elsewhere in the book, for "the aesthetic spaciousness" which "equally embraces the up-to-date continuity of traditions and the experimenting intentions". For the former—and this the book makes quite clear—may linger on for a long time without the latter; while the latter, of its very nature, comprises the former.

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Pomogáts, Béla  
Az újabb magyar irodalom 1945–1981  
(Contemporary Hungarian Literature from 1945 to 1981)  
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Hungarian literary science has a long standing tradition of literary histories written by one person, and these, even if unable to compete with literary histories compiled by an institution or at least by several people in terms of precision and disinterestedness, always have the advantage of possessing a personal character. If the author is sufficiently objective or well-informed, he may touch upon connections which will lead to the formulation of a concept of literary or even social history, over and above a mere discussion of the relevant material. The discussion of contemporary, or almost contemporary literature is particularly likely to produce such results, in that the literary works and phenomena it is to consider will be continuous with the writing of the critical study itself, thus implicating the literary historian as a participant in the processes he describes. For this reason, apart from their activity in the realm of literary 'historical' science in the stricter

\* Since then appeared the first volume of the selected bibliography of Czechoslovakian Hungarian literature: József Szőke: *A csehszlovákiai magyar irodalom válogatott bibliográfiája*. Vol. I., 1945–1960. Bratislava, Madách, 1982. pp. 393. The second volume will comprise the years 1961–1970, the third one the years 1971–1980. (Editorial remark.)