

modern, cannot be gauged by the scale of the moment. Rannit is not a contemporary poet . . . he is something different, something greater." This is true; yet true modernity too is an aspect of permanence. The poems of *Cantus firmus* eloquently testify that their author is an artist of our time and temper.

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A MAGYAR IRODALOM FEJLŐDÉSTÖRTÉNETE. By János Horváth. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976. 372 pp.

János Horváth (1878–1961) is probably the most significant, and certainly the most influential, literary historian of twentieth-century Hungary. A professor of Hungarian literature at the University of Budapest from 1923 to 1948, and the author of more than a dozen major literary studies, Horváth has shaped the minds of nearly two generations of scholars, critics, and historians of literature.

In 1908, Horváth published a short essay in which he raised the problem facing the historian of Hungarian literature: what, precisely, *is* Hungarian literature, and what are the categories with which the literary historian should work? In his essay, Horváth argued that the categories posited by previous historians of Hungarian literature were *a priori* categories that were either too broad or too narrow to be of use in ordering and synthesizing the large body of works produced in Hungary over the course of more than seven centuries. To maintain, for example, that only what is written in the Hungarian language should count as Hungarian literature, or that only works of outstanding artistic merit which express the national ethos should be considered literature is to stultify literary history. Instead, he concluded, literary history (as distinguished from literature *per se*) must be seen as autochthonous (*önelvű*), with an independent life of its own. The concept of what *is* literature, therefore, is not static but is a result of an ongoing historical process of literary awareness, that is, taste, which in turn is constituted by the relationship of writers, works, and readers, from one age to another. It is this sense of awareness that determines what is to count as literature.

According to Horváth, the traditional date of 1772 marks the great watershed in Hungarian literary history. Previous centuries show only scattered manifestations of a slowly developing sense of literary awareness. The year 1772 is followed by three stages of development: (1) the stage of cosmopolitan classicism, a conscious struggle against the dominance of Latin, waged in the interests of a Hungarian-language literature; (2) the stage of nationalistic romanticism, which aims to achieve intellectual originality and autonomy, and, in practice, results in the cultivation of indigenous Hungarian historical sources, such as the *Gesta* of Anonymus; and (3) the final stage, which Horváth called Hungarian realism, the highest embodiments of which are János Arany in literature and Pál Gyulai in criticism.

This, in outline, was the thesis that guided Horváth's work in the four decades that followed. The present volume reprints Horváth's original 1908 study (now almost inaccessible), together with alterations and additions penciled in by the author during the course of the next ten years. His brief essay is followed by various studies originally written as parts of a cohesive monograph but actually published as chapters of other works. Thus, the volume under consideration is a convenient, one-volume presentation of Horváth's overview of the evolution of Hungarian literature up to about the 1880s.

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