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Cultural Policy and the Study of Comparative Literature

During the Soviet period, political correctness was a major requirement in the field of literary history and theory. Since 1960 – 1970 literary relations have been established as a course at the universities. Significant emphasis was placed on Georgian – Russian literary relations, as this particular field of literary relations had a special ideological significance. In the late 1970s, and especially in the 1980s, first with Perestroika and then with the collapse of Soviet regime, Georgian literary critics began to re – evaluate the perspectives of literary theory and the teaching and research of comparative literature. The new generation of scientists were less concerned with Soviet regulations.

Clearly, any trend and culture policy is determined by any turning point in history. If we recall our recent past, it must be said that after the Rose Revolution, following the country's declared Western course, a new generation of literary critics clearly followed the European system of periodization, or "Eurochronology", as the American anthropologist of Indian origin Arjun Appadurai calls it. From the same period, a number of studies have been conducted in this direction, where the periodization of Georgian literature follows the European one (obviously, taking into account the national peculiarities). One of the pioneers of this trend is, for example, the collection "Georgian Literature of the XVI – XVIII centuries. At the crossroads of Eastern and Western cultural – literary processes", published in 2012 by the Institute of Georgian Literature. Researches of this type, in addition to their educational function, also have a strategic position – strategic insofar as bringing the issue of periodization to the forefront brings subjects and events in line with a certain cultural orientation and, on the other hand, raises the issue of cultural orientation. For example, Irma Radiani's article "Reconstruction of the European Concept in Georgian Literature" is a particularly important in this respect and the word "Reconstruction" in the title can be considered as a unifying concept of the collection itself: "The claim that the reconstruction of the Western literary concept in Georgia is linked to the Russian cultural and literary influences formed in the 19th century seems to have no basis. Georgian literature was already on a chosen path – it was a path to Europe, Christian Georgian writing."