

Summary

The Jewish theme and its various aspects are slightly processed in the Slovak literature. The aim of this thesis is to point out the importance of the topic. The main guideline of each interpretation is the term of identity, which is also a relevant aspect when presenting a broader range of contexts. Identity, in this case, is a phenomenon that can be best seized in the opposition of "we" versus "them", when its meaning and content (who and what am I, who and what are you?) are reflected in the most accurate way. The Slovak-Jewish relations are a representative example of such a binary opposition. The hypothesis of the work is that the representation practice of Slovak literature regarding the Jewish topic may be related to the non-literary context. The focus of the research is the examination of the constructions of Jewish identities that appeared in various interpretative and compositional layers of works of Slovakian high literature. The works of non-Jewish authors are considered to be hetero-interpretations, while the works of Jewish authors are self-interpretations of the same phenomenon, Jewish identity. Using the notion of tradition, the diachronic aspect of the phenomenon is taken into account. In the thesis two relevant definitions are confronted: *Gadamer's* rather positive steady and a priori tradition and the interpretation of postcolonial tradition. Postcolonial tradition points out to the reverse face of the phenomenon and to its negative function, which aims to present and preserve repression and power. By contrasting these two definitions the key question is the following: how does the representation tradition of Jewish topic appear in Slovak literature? Is there a permanent tradition or are there changing traditions (tendencies) emerging from the complexity of power-desire relationships? The question is answered in three interpretative parts. In the first part, with the help of the operative category of stereotype, dealing with the six depicting aspects of Slovak literature, the picture of Jew in the Slovak literature is drawn. The image of the Slovak Jewish innkeeper reflects the social status of Jewry (non-rural status, mobile class or prismatic group). There are also such European-wide motives like their non-Christian origin and usury and especially Slovak element: the motive of the fear of assimilation. These motives have reached their zenith in the anti-Semitic depicting tendencies of Slovak realistic literature. As a result of this fact, two novels modified by socialist censorship are presented in the thesis. In connection with the issue of alcoholism the thesis deals with tendential literature, in which the Jews featured

as malicious culprits. In the stereotype of Jewish fraud – frequented figure –, who is for instance contratypically depicted in the novel *Reštavrácia* as a protagonist, who aims for the good thing. Real contratypes are presented in connection with the short stories of *Martin Kukučín* and *Božena Slančíková-Timrava*. Realist writers turned their attention to ordinary people and everyday themes, so the figure of the Jew could become the main protagonist in their short stories. As a conclusion, based on the summarized deductions from interpretations, the hetero-interpretation practice of Slovak literature – up to the Holocaust period – reflects a large degree of negative stereotyping. The proof of the sense-forming power of the Holocaust in the Slovak literature is the change in literary tendencies. The negative stereotypes were replaced by certain thematic fixations and unilateralism: the topic of Holocaust became the center of literary interest. In this thesis, it is inclined that there is no continuous and generally valid, normative tradition in the Slovak literature regarding the Jewish theme: the primal motives and meanings have not persisted and they are not preconditions of understanding. In the work several texts of two writers with Jewish origin are interpreted. *Leopold Lahola* in his collection of short stories, *Posledná vec*, transformed the tragical and authentic reality into aesthetically valuable language, which was not acceptable for contemporary socialist literary criticism. The thesis points out by analyzing the iconic novel from *Gejza Vámoš*, *Odlomená haluz* that the writer's idea of the golden age is a cultural hybrid, an ideological concept reflecting the assimilation perspectives of the first Czechoslovak Republic. The Jewish question in his work appears to be the result of a certain camouflage, a colonial mimicry, because the writer's ideology is a grotesque reflection of the "colonizer's image". To construct his ideology he uses stereotype, the negation of religious identity using Christian logic, and constructs of pseudo-identities.