



**Portraying Countryside
in Central European Literature
Online Symposium 23–24/03/2021**

supported by

• **Visegrad Fund**



Abstracts (in order of appearance)

Literature in Environmental Perspective

Dr. Anna Varga (Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich, Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society) – **Dr. Gábor Máté PhD** (University of Pécs, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

Traditional ecological knowledge and landuse changes of the Puszta in Middle-Transdanubia region of Hungary based on the works of Gyula Illyés and Ervin Lázár

Recognizing contemporary environmental problems become uniquely evident in understanding the relationship between landscape and human. Multidisciplinarity and environmental humanities research can contribute to all these. These are easier to address in the countrysides where traditional land use is still active or at least a living local community that still has sufficient knowledge of the surrounding landscape. In landscapes where traditional or historical farming has been abandoned or the countryside is depopulated, it is already more difficult to reconstruct the kind of landscape, landscape, and human connection, the knowledge, that has shaped even the current biocultural values. In such cases, literary works can serve as an essential source, not only through landscape descriptions but also through the mentality and relationship of the people living there to nature. The latter is otherwise challenging to reconstruct and understand through archival documents, manuscript maps, and aerial photographs.

I carry out my research in the significantly changed landscape of the South-West Mezőföld, where historically landuse management was started to demolish during the collectivizations. My goal is to explore the socio-ecological system of the 'Puszta' world that has defined it for centuries in the Transdanubian regions. This 'Puszta' is not just a flat, steppe habitat type, but also a name of historical landuse type, which is a large estate, especially in the Transdanubian region of Hungary. During my work, I analyze the writings of two Hungarian writers, Gyula Illyés (1902-1983) and Ervin Lázár (1936-2006), who spend their childhood in

different 'Puszta' and various estates of the region. I examine their writings from landscape history and ethnobiology and based on the following questions: *What natural environment is revealed in the writings (flora and fauna)? What changes have done two writers report about all this? What changes can be observed based on other landscape historical sources?* My results so far show that both writers had a thorough knowledge of nature thanks to their childhood, which was closely related to nature and the local community.

Primarily based on the works of Ervin Lázár, the courtyards of the farm centers and the wildlife of the pastures can be accurately reconstructed. The work of both writers reveals to readers the unique and bound social arrangement of the world of these centers, 'Puszta.' The relationship with the landscape can be significantly determined by the fact that people did not own the land they cultivated, but their daily dependence on nature presupposes a thorough knowledge of the landscape. Both of them wrote in detail about the liquidation of the 'Puszta'. Their works also reveal the process of eradicating the puszta and its long-term effects, which have significantly changed not only the countryside but also the daily lives of the people who live there or even their heirs's life too. The former economic centers, 'Puszta', presented by the two writers became equal to the land, and their memory was best preserved in these writings.

Section 1: Older Literature

prof. Mgr. Jan Malura, Ph.D. (University of Ostrava, Faculty of Arts)

Literature of the Rural People in the Early Modern Period – Basic Concepts in the Czech-Polish Perspective

The paper will reflect different approaches of literary science to the literature of rural people, or to be more precise to works addressed to lower-class social groups (countryside, small town, farmers and craftsmen). Basic concepts with special regard to the Czech-Polish context will be explained. The idea of *folk literature* in the works of romantic philologists (V. B. Nebeský), the approach of Marxists (B. Václavěk, J. Hrabák) and their category of *semi-folk literature* will be mentioned. It will also focus on Bakhtin's concept of *folk culture*, *carnavalesque* and *grotesque realism*. Bakhtin's works had a considerable influence in Central Europe, yet they are also criticized today. The paper will also deal with the initiatives of interdisciplinary cultural history, as represented by Peter Burke and his work *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. Impulses of Polish research, which usually does without the problematic term "people", but uses a differentiated range of terms (*sowizdrzalska literatura*, *literatura plebejska/rybaltowska*), are crucial for the interpretation of rural literature of the early modern period. Above all, it works with the elaborate concept of *popular culture* and the concept of "literary circulation" (*obiegi literatury*) i.e. the idea of historically variable communication circuits and distribution channels. The conclusion of the paper will point out typical problems of interpretation associated with the research of rural

literature and ask the question: what belongs to rural literature in the 16th and 17th centuries?

Mgr. Jakub Ivánek, Ph.D. (University of Ostrava, Faculty of Arts)

The Countryside in Czech Baroque Literature

Czech Baroque literature is characterized by being restricted to the lower strata of society, and thus to a narrowed genre spectrum (high, aristocratic and educational culture in the Czech lands was in the 17th and 18th centuries mostly in another language). Since these lower strata of society mean inhabitants of towns and villages, a question arises as to what of the Czech Baroque literature was aimed at the rural people (whether from villages or small towns) and whether the countryside and rural people as such were somehow reflected in this literature. The paper will focus on the literature that the people of the Czech countryside encountered in the 17th and 18th centuries. We will pay attention to drama, religious-educational prose, preaching, prayer production and songs, whether religious or secular. The two groups meet in a *broadside ballad*. Cheap prints probably satisfied the needs of the villagers with the growth of literacy in the 18th century the most (*chapbooks*, pilgrimage literature, superstition prints, etc.). The production of so-called *písmáci*, i.e. literate peasants, which often remained in manuscripts, will not be left out either.

Rumen István Csörsz, PhD (Eötvös Loránd Research Network in Budapest, Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute for Literary Studies)

“My shepherd stick is better than the crown.” The image of the shepherd in the eighteenth-nineteenth century Hungarian popular literature

The motive of the shepherd was very frequent in the eighteenth century Hungarian popular literature (in anonym songs and authored works as well). Compared with the earlier centuries we can determinate, that the different shepherd types are included into the Hungarian poetry in a higher proportion in this period. It was related with the consolidation of the agriculture after the Turkish occupation (1680's) and the rich shepherd culture of the multi-ethnic land, for example the better awareness of the Slovakian and Rumanian mountain shepherding. The shepherd motives were enriched in three fields, which were in intensive contact with each other: 1) ancient Roman, bucolic shepherd figures after eclogues by Virgil, 2) Rococo pastoral characters of the Christmas dramatical plays and popular songs (school theatre, different variants of Czech-Moravian, Slovakian and Hungarian *shepherd masses* by J. J. Ryba, G. Zrunek etc.), 3) genre figures of the realistic shepherds in the eighteenth century. From the beginning of the nineteenth century the Hungarian broadside literature, the very popular chapbooks helped to spread these motives, especially by genre songs, for example the herdsman songs by Gergely Édes and József Mátyási, shepherd songs by Mihály Vitkovics and later the *puszta* poems by Sándor Petőfi (the title character of his

epic poem *János vitéz*, 'János the hero' was originally a shepherd boy too). The protagonists of the early Hungarian outlaw ballads were initially shepherds (swineherd, horse-shepherds or herdsmen) too, they were criminalized only later. The paper would like nuance the image of shepherds in the early modern Hungarian literature by motivic analysis and by aspects of sociology of literature.

Prof. PhDr. Miloslav Vojtech, PhD. (Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Arts)

Literary Representation of the Countryside in Slovak Classicist Poetry

The paper will deal with the issue of literary representation of the countryside in Slovak classicist poetry. It will concern the process of appropriation of literary models of Rococo and Classicist stylized rural idyll in poetry at the turn of the 19th century (Juraj Palkovič, Juraj Rohoň, Juraj Fándly and Bohuslav Tablic) and in poetic texts of high classicism from the 1830s (Ján Hollý). It will focus on genre representations of rural space in classicist poetry (Anacreontic songs, classicist odes, elegies, texts of occasional poetry, idylls, epic verses), as well as on the process of transformation of spatial contexts of the rural idyll, which during the first third of the 19th century, changed from universally rendered and stylized images of nameless and atemporal arcadic countries into locally patriotic and national ideologized and geographically concretized rural spaces, thus anticipating the process of emphasizing the countryside in Slovak culture and its value as the primary space of national existence.

Gábor Vaderna PhD. (Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Faculty of Arts)

Rural Landscapes in the Hungarian Literature: Idyll of Destruction? The Example of the Hungarian Poet Dániel Berzsenyi (1776–1836)

At the turn of the 19th century, a new type of literary culture emerged in the Hungarian Kingdom. The first periodicals were printed, which also published literary material; there was a lively critical conversation about the evaluation of literary works; a kind of aesthetic sophistication became a requirement; etc. In general, new institutions served the new needs of the public sphere. The cultivation of literature and the conversation about literature were thus closely linked to the discussion of social development and the nature of appropriate social interactions. Thus, the problem arose that the scene of real culture is city that incorporates and creates culture or village that is closer to nature. In Hungarian literature, the same authors who explained the idea of ancient *urbanitas* in their poems often wrote pastorals and wandered through the idyllic landscapes of Arcadia. In my presentation, I would like to examine the context of the ideals created in imagination of different spaces, and of which linked these ideals to different theories of social development and culture. In the poems of a Hungarian poet, Dániel Berzsenyi (1776–1836), I will present the contrast between the village and the city, the rural idyll and the *urbanitas*, the republican and polite models of history.

Section 2: 19th Century Literature

Mgr. Marta Fülöpová, PhD. (Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Arts)

Farmers, Scholars and the Gentry in the Works of Slovak Romanticism

The paper deals with mapping the image of the countryside and farmers in the works of Slovak literary romanticism. The idea of Slovak romanticism is generally associated with rusticism and ruralism, which is related to the myth of the plebeian nation present in public discourse. The paper aims to examine the validity of the idea of rustic Slovak romantic literature, notes what space is dominantly present in the works of Slovak romanticism, identifies the image of the village, its characteristics, its position in the system of other spaces and also concerns the characters with whom the space called Slovakia is populated. It is based on the research of ethnologist Eva Krekovičová, who distinguishes between two ways of portraying Slovaks in works of the 19th century. The first group consists of farmers and shepherds, members of the popular strata of the population. The second group is represented by scholars professing the Slovak national identity, which they co-created and formed based on observations of the first group. In addition to these two, representatives of the gentry also appeared in Slovak literature, who were marginalized by the myth of the Plebeian nation.

doc. Róbert Kiss Szemán, PhD (Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Faculty of Arts)

Slovak, Hungarian, Slovenian and Croatian Villages in Ján Kollár's Cestopis do Horní Italie

Artistic and factual depiction of the village as a bearer of ethnic and national phenomenon gained an exceptional position among Central European national emblematic symbols in the first half of the 19th century. The case study focuses on the analysis and evaluation of the depiction of the mentioned phenomenon in Kollár's *Cestopis do Horní Italie*: the author of the paper monitors and evaluates the occurrence of Slovak, Hungarian, Slovenian and Croatian ethnic groups and the rural environment as well as their relationship to the surrounding cultural landscapes. In this sense, the Slovak village must be freed from being subjugated by the Hungarian cultural landscape, which is interpreted through the conceptual system of postcolonial literary science. At the same time, the Slovenian and Croatian villages suffer under the weight of the German language and population in dependencies with a mixed population. Slavic villages can be resurrected only with the help of nationally conscious urban intelligentsia, who according to Kollár's concept, also offers a solution to social poverty and being uncultured.

Mgr. Martin Tomášek, Ph.D. (University of Ostrava, Faculty of Arts)

Changes in the Image of the Countryside in the Prose of Czech (Post)romanticism and Biedermeier

In the intended study, I will focus on selected works depicting rural life (Kramérius, Mácha, Tyl, Sabina, Němcová, Hálek, Světlá) and on how literary space is created in them. I am interested in how the two concurrent movements cope with space, in what they coincide and in what they differ, whether and how aesthetic complexity is reflected not only in the story, the characteristics of the characters and typical motifs, but also in the depiction of the environment.

Mgr. Eva Palkovičová (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Slovak Literature)

Gamekeeper's Lodge – Idyllic Topos of Slovak Postromanticism

Even in the second half of the 19th century, the countryside is understood as an environment preserving and reproducing the Slovak national culture and identity, and therefore remains an important literary theme, although literary works are more oriented towards a readership from small towns. In this context, the gamekeeper's lodge appears to be a typical literary topos: it is a place separated from the social structures of the Slovak village, isolated from real problems of the popular class and political or national conflicts, and thus has the potential to embody a Slovak idyllic place that is attractive to urban readers. At the same time, the authors follow up on Sládkovič's *Detvan* and prepare space for the later Hviezdoslav's *Hájnikova žena*. I will analyse the topos of the gamekeeper's lodge in the novellas called *Presadený kvietok* (1867) and *Bratia* (1863) by Daniel Bachát-Dumný and Mikuláš Štefan Ferienčík respectively and I will observe how, in the literary representation of the gamekeeper's lodge, the Herder-Kollár myth of the Slavic people, also used in romantic conceptions of the Slovak folk space, intertwines with remnants of romantic poetics and post-romantic purposefulness of literary work.

PhDr. Jana Pátková, Ph.D. (Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Arts)

Forms of Exocitization of the Slovak Village in Czech Travelogues of One Century

Literary representations of the Slovak village occupy an important position in the development of Czech travel writing. The depiction of the rural environment and solitary dwellings found in forests in travelogues was also based on literary-aesthetic development trends in the given period, which included other ideological (national) aspects. While in the 19th century a shift from Slavic mutuality to closer Czech-Slovak mutuality can be observed, we can find specific evidence of Czechoslovakism in travel texts from the first half of the 20th century. In addition to such ideologically constructed literary representations of the Slovak village, travelogues released from this national pressure also appear, although very exceptionally.

In this paper, I focus on the depiction of the fantastic-imaginative world of the Slovak village on the material of Czech travelogues from the 1830s to the 1930s in the imagological interpretation of key constructs of identity at the time. During the century in question, we can observe how the image of the village changed depending on the fundamental ideological concepts. What remains constant among these many variables is the view of Slovakia as a world of fairy tales and legends. The material base will consist of travelogues by Vilém Dušan Lambl, Božena Němcová, Rudolf Pokorný and Josef Váchal.

Andor Mészáros, PhD (Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Faculty of Arts)

The Image of “Village Dandy” in the Dramatic Work “A Falu Rossza” by Ede Tóth

The idealized image of a Hungarian village was created by 19th century romanticism and post-romanticism. The society of a modernizing city in the dualist period of Hungary has already turned to this rural idyll with a certain nostalgia. Tóth's work depicts the imaginary world of the Hungarian village of a dualistic state as a caricature of rural society. The main character of the play is *frajer vesnice* Sándor Göndör, who disrupts the idyllic life and traditional society of the village. The most famous Hungarian play of the time premiered at the National Theatre in Budapest in 1875 and was translated into many languages. Tóth's play was performed on theatre stages in Vienna, Moscow, etc., and determined the thinking about the Hungarian countryside until the first half of the 20th century.

dr hab. Małgorzata Litwinowicz-Droździel (University of Warsaw, Institute of Polish Culture)

Views of Polishness and their Variations

In romantic literature – the landscape speaks itself and conveys meanings. Rhein rivers sings about her gold; Lake District says poetic verses, as well as Scottish Highlands; mountains, seas and primeval forests – they all started to speak in the XIX-th century.

One could ask: why and what for? Since this “natural lore” became a story of a nation: in the XIX-th century rocky mountains, magnificent old trees and big rivers don't tell a story of the earth and her inhabitants. Their “stories” are focused on primevality of nation and its natural, physical connection to the landscape. Finally – what is natural becomes a vehicle for what is historical.

Approximately in the middle of the century the spirit of the story slightly changes, since attention of writers and creators is attracted not only by the landscape itself, but also – by it's inhabitants called generally “folk”. In Polish case the result of this „observation” is concluding that we enter the modernity with heavy burden of social, legal and economical inequalities and abolition of serfdom did not solve them.

So – who are “they” in the literature from the last decades of XIX century and first decades of XX? A problem, specimen form colonial exhibition, inventory of the open-air museum or

individuals with full citizenship? Men and women or rather homogenous “peasantry”? Image or people?

Referring to those questions in my paper I will try to analyze process of transformation “views of Polishness” – reading closely texts of Orzeszkowa, Wyspiański, Reymont, Orkan, Żeromski.

Appendix: Contemporary Literature in Environmental Perspective

Prof. PaedDr. Martin Golema, PhD. (Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Faculty of Arts)

From the First Enlightenment Sketches to More Complex Literary Images. The Slovak Countryside through the Eyes of Protestant Scholars from the Josephine Period

In this paper we will focus on two prototype images (or rather sketches) of the countryside and the village people, which originated and formed in a specific community of Slovak Protestant scholars, evangelical pastors working in the wider vicinity of mining towns during the reign of Emperor Joseph II. These conflicting sketches were more comprehensive in their literary thematization in the 19th and 20th centuries, but they retained several basic features. We find these even under today's polarized media images of the world, which are very actively and argumentatively manifested in "cultural wars" in the Slovak environment, and here we can legitimately look for updated old "sketches" of some "puritanically" strict Enlightenment teachers of the people especially favourable to cities and urban culture, but also their romantic or protoromantic opponents emphasising the village, ethnicity and the countryside.

Section 3: Prose in 20th Century Literature

Mgr. Dana Hučková, CSc. (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Slovak Literature)

Images from the Village (the Image of the Countryside in Slovak Literature at the Turn of the 20th Century)

The depiction of village life had been a permanent part of Slovak prose since the middle of the 19th century. The countryside also dominates in folk education and enlightenment-oriented prose, fulfilling the criteria of a functional model of literature. The so-called *village images* not only documented the ethnographic peculiarity of the environment, but also reflected folk psychology, within which everything new and unknown was rejected. The image of the countryside presented from the point of view of an intelligent person trying to teach and shape folk readers used stereotypes and schemes of simple genre forms (e.g. fairy tales and exempla). Other texts were in terms of genre on the border of fiction and reportage. Literary works with a higher artistic ambition were about the problematization of

the ideal of a (morally) unspoiled rural environment, even in the context of its clash with the modernizing surrounding world. These diverse aspects can be documented by texts by authors such as Božena Slančíková Timrava, Jozef Gregor Tajovský, Ľudmila Podjavorinská, Vladimír Hurban Vladimírov, Samo Cambel.

Sarolta Krisztina Tóthpál, PhD (Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Faculty of Arts)

The Role of the Village as Home in *Odplavená dedina* by Dezső Szabó and *Živý bič* by Milo Urban

My research focuses on the issue of the village as home in the novels *Odplavená dedina* by Dezső Szabó and *Živý bič* by Milo Urban, which offers an opportunity to approach these two works from a new perspective, i.e. from the point of view of the venue. The comparative analysis is based on the literary fact that Urban knew and valued the work of Szabó (cf. Karol Csiba: *Medzi živým bičom a Gardistom, Slovenská literatúra LXII* (2015), 427-434). I perceive the phenomenon of the village from several aspects of spatial poetics: I examine the difference between the city and the village, which is based on the opposite of "my own" and "foreign" space, as well as the movement of characters in these spaces. The aim of the study is also the analysis of the complicated relationship between two spaces: the location of one space (village) in another space (home). Meetings of different characters in the mentioned spatial relations play a crucial role in the conception of the novels, which is closely connected with certain temporal and spatial factors. The events of the war in both novels form the background of the plot, but at the forefront of the narration is how the village experiences these events as well as the desire of soldiers to return to their home space. Emphasis is also placed on the precise definition of the village as a single space that will create its own norms (e.g. punishes those who do not act according to its norms, etc.).

dr hab. Aleksandra E. Banot, prof. ATH (University of Bielsko-Biala)

Reach for the clouds. The problems of rural woman emancipation on the example of Maria Wardas's novel "Maryśka ze Śląska"

In the 1930s Maria Wardas, one of the first Polish female pilots, working as a secretary, published another book – *Maryśka ze Śląska. Powieść lotnicza dla młodzieży* (*Mary from Silesia. An Aviation Novel for Young People*, 1937). This quasi-autobiographical novel tells the story of poor teenage peasant girl living in Cieszyn Silesia who learns to fly a glider and gets a chance to continue her schooling.

The aim of my article is to show the various problems related to the emancipation of rural women – both those factors which support it: personality conditions, the role of education, dress (trousers), and finally machines (airplane), and those which limit it: the conservatism of the peasant community expressed in attachment to tradition, the role of the Catholic Church and, above all, the local parish priest, etc. I am also interested in an attempt to

answer the question as to why Wardas's novel, emancipatory in its message, is so unique in Polish literature – literature that, after all, often touches on peasant themes, e. g. in the works of Eliza Orzeszkowa and Władysław S. Reymont.

Mgr. Lukáš Holeček, Ph.D. (Czech Academy of Sciences, Institute of Czech Literature)

Representation of the Countryside in Czech Prose in 1935-1946: The Countryside as an Indicator of Changing Times

The paper covers the dynamics of changes in the Czech "rural novel" in the defined period 1935–1946. Against the background of the tension between the aesthetic and contemporary context, it will focus on selected works with a rural theme, which will capture the changes and varieties of the Czech rural novel, their reception horizon in connection with the crisis in 1938–1939, the Protectorate and the immediate post-war period. The aim of the paper is defined by two works - František Křelina's novel *Hubená léta* (1935), which became the first volume of the edition *Hlasy země*, a platform representing Czech ruralism, and Oskar Mališ's novel *Sedm tučných let* (1946), which anticipated constructive collectivism. This suggests that some of the ideological tendencies that we associate with a particular period (or political regime) continuously shifted between seemingly different political contexts.

Representations of the countryside always had their political potential. However, it is a question of how politicization influenced the very construction of prose and the structure of values in each work (and to what extent it is also conditioned by the chosen research point of view), and to what extent it was the result of external processes, especially contemporary efforts to conceptualize or ideologize the countryside. I would like to relate this issue to the concept of the 'countryside' as a 'living place'. I observe the representations of the countryside not through the lens of ideological determinism, but I perceive them primarily as a representation of the existential "experience of the countryside". In the paper, I will touch on the conceptualization of Czech ruralism, its programmatic approach to rural issues and its relationship to politics. I will also focus on the issue of comparing the "literary countryside" and historical contexts in a broader Central European perspective.

Mgr. Ondřej Tichý (University of Ostrava, Faculty of Arts)

The Countryside in Miroslav Rafaj's Works of the Czech Normalisation

The paper attempts to present the image of the countryside in Miroslav Rafaj's novels of the Czech normalisation *Zahrada po rodičích*, *Obtíže rovin* and in his collection of short stories *Výzvy k soukromým slavnostem*. - The presentation will address two points. The first will be a presentation of the countryside in the selected works. We will be interested in depicting the countryside and rural area. We will also focus on how the characters are displayed in the excerpted materials. For them, the focus will be on the characteristics of the actions, whether, for example, there is a change in behaviour in the environment of the village and

the city. We will also focus on the relationship of the characters to their homeland. These are often people who return to their home village after an unsuccessful job in the city. Since we will analyse novels from the time of Czech normalisation, we will focus on the images of agricultural and labour work in the countryside. - In the second point, we will start from the fact that Miroslav Rafaj was the author of work-related and construction novels in the 70s and 80s. In the mentioned period, the countryside was even mythicized and ideologized by the authors. We will try to confirm or refute this idea based on the analysed works.

Section 4: Journalism and Poetry in 20th Century Literature

Mgr. Zdeněk Smolka, Ph.D. (University of Ostrava, Faculty of Arts)

Decline of Idyll. Poetry about the Moravian-Silesian Beskydy in the First Half of the 20th Century

The paper will be devoted to Czech written poetry, which depicts the Moravian-Silesian Beskydy mountains. It is limited in time to the period between the early 1890s and the late 1940s. Attention is paid to the works of well-known, even canonical authors (Petr Bezruč, Vilém Závada, Jaroslav Durych), lesser-known authors, whose significance is limited to the researched region (Metoděj Jahn, Josef Kalus), and now forgotten authors (Lev Kazík Karvinský, Jindra Cink). It is based on the assumption that the appearance of the depicted landscape is influenced by genre modes. The priority mode for displaying the Beskydy Mountains is idyllic. It is probably the agricultural character of the area, and especially the mountain method of sheep breeding, which was introduced here by the so-called Wallachian colonization, that may have motivated the poets to use this mode. Both are reminiscent of the prototypical idyllic landscape of Arcadia. The idyll also corresponds to national revival and defence tendencies.

However, the ideal state belongs to the past; the present is characterised by its decline and thus also elegiac mourning for it. So, time usually brings decay. Only in exceptional cases do there be signs of its sinusoidal course, which would bring at least some idyllic features back into reality. Non-literary realities, especially the national, social and political development of the region, also contribute to the transition from idyll to elegy. This affects current life in the Beskydy countryside. Agricultural work is less familiar or replaced by factory work. The industrialization of the landscape is both an accompanying phenomenon and one of the causes of the decline of the idyll. Spiritual changes are also symptomatic. The Beskydy Mountains are connected with the national pagan tradition, which is complemented by the Christian religion. Faith is an integral part of rural life, helping people to endure life's difficulties, but even that sometimes fails. The mountains therefore also fluctuate between sacred and profane space.

Mgr. Michal Habaj, PhD. (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Slovak Literature)

Return to the Village. On the Topic of Rural Spaces in Slovak Poetry of the 1930s

The polarity of the cultural spaces of the village and the town is one of the most discussed topics in Slovak poetry of the interwar period. During the 1920s, the fascination with urban colour, urbanism and civil exoticism gradually waned, and for the 1930s there was a characteristic turn to rural areas, the countryside and nature. This turn is conditioned by generation and literary-aesthetically as well as cultural-socially and historically, and also has its national-political aspects. Contemporary civilizational trends, characterized by rediscovering folklore, tradition and the folk element, direct their interest back to the village and re-formulate the cultural, artistic and aesthetic characteristics of modernity by acknowledging tradition and being Slovak. In the context of literary development, in the interwar period, we can speak of the 1920s as years of "escape" whereas the thirties symbolize the years of "return". In the study we examine various aspects of this cultural transformation in the poetry of key representatives of the post-revolutionary generation of poets (Ján Smrek, Emil Boleslav Lukáč, Laco Novomeský, Ján Poničan), i.e. authors who - paradoxically - introduced the theme of the city into Slovak poetry as a new, modern living space. In what ways does it manifest itself, in what does it show common features and what does the inclination towards rural spaces in their poetry from the 1930s actually mean?

prof. PaedDr. Iva Málková, Ph.D. (University of Ostrava, Faculty of Arts)

Images of the Countryside and their Character in the Poetry of the Protectorate

Czech poetry during the Second World War was motivated and thematically marked by the circumstances of the Munich Agreement in September 1938 and the occupation of the territory that remained after former Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Expressively, poetry breaks free from avant-garde imagery, transforms it, and returns to poetics that has been decisive for modern Czech poetry since the appearance of Karel Hynek Mácha, it returns to the roots of Czech poetry (baroque, folk poetry). After a wave of excited poetry recording the national threat, the publishers focus on poetry collections that return to the essence of being Czech. Thus, images of the countryside appear in the collections, which have the nature of certainty.

The traditionalist line of protectorate poetry consists of poets "who united in a faith of faithfulness to the village and the country" (Čarek). It was Jan Čarek, a strong representative of ruralist poetry, who defined it himself (in radio programs and book publications) in the early 1940s: *If I had to say briefly what ruralism is, I would say that it is the artist's village heart. Neither the writer who writes about the village, nor always the one who comes from the village may not be called a poet of ruralism. That poet is the writer to whom the village is a poetic destiny, whose eyes have the village purity of seeing the world, from whose verses or lines, like from a layer of cut grain, blows and rises the inner heritage of the village and the earth.*

Images of the countryside (often in connection with the theme of nature) are also found in poets who did not belong to ruralists, but *capture the realities of rural life by simple poetic objecthood*, they can emerge from the idyllism of the countryside, hope of existence to connect with the rhythm of rural work. Thus, in addition to the poetry of Jan Čarek, František Lazecký, František Neužil, Josef Berka, František Křelina or Václav Renč and Jan Pilař, we would like to focus on poetics, which captures the countryside in the form of a soulful landscape (Jan Zahradníček), in the landscape of childhood, the family landscape (Josef Hora, František Halas, Jaroslav Kolman-Cassius, František Hrubín), the native region and the myth-permeated landscape (Bohusav Reynek, Vilém Závada).

Mgr. Karol Csiba, PhD. (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Slovak Literature)

The Theme of the Countryside in Post-revolutionary Cultural Journalism in Slovakia

The aim of the paper is to provide a more comprehensive view of the problem in a specific period. The presentation is based on a comparison of broader literary material, concretized through articles in magazines *Elán*, *DAV*, *Slovenské pohľady*, *Mladé Slovensko*. The paper works on a certain assumption that rural society itself can be understood as the result of numerous and variously determined interpretations. These are grounded on literature, journalism, politics or ideology. Each of these areas is characterized by a different language, which is reflected in the diverse representation of society.

Individual magazine articles shape the form of society in the context of a literary tradition based on the opposition of the traditional and the modern. Tradition in them is supposed to be a concept representing an idea of value continuity. However, its imaginative character is revealed, which forces us to imagine a certain story. The paper aims to point out the universality of this topic and reveal its polemical dimension. At least in part, it seeks to expand knowledge about the then understanding of art and especially to point out some aspects of the journalistic depiction of Slovak rural society in the twenties and thirties of the 20th century.

Section 5: Contemporary Literature

doc. dr. Špela Sevšek Šrnel, PhD. (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts)

Representation of the Countryside in Slovenian Prose in the 1990s: Peripheral Regions of Prekmurje and Istria

Slovenian novels in the early 1990s portrayed Istria and Prekmurje and updated their image through re-mythicization and restoration of regional exoticism. The prose of the so-called regional fantasy fiction of the authors F. Lainšček, V. Žabot and M. Tomšič represents a characteristic literary tendency in a certain historical moment - the social context of the new state. In this paper, I will also focus on the image of the countryside in more ambitious

literary texts in terms of narrative, thematic and genre innovation at the turn of the millennium. On the example of prose by Štefan Kardoš, Franjo Frančič and Jure Jakob, I will try to show exceeding the convention of literary representation of the Slovenian rural environment (universalism versus melos of the country, the topic of physical work versus idealization of rural life).

Mgr. Radoslav Passia, Ph.D. (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Slovak Literature)

Slovak Countryside in Contemporary Prose

The paper presents the representations of the Slovak countryside in contemporary literature (after 2000), focuses mainly on the work of the middle and younger prose generation, new regionalism and the image of the Slovak countryside in selected authors from Central Europe (A. Stasiuk, J. Topol, L. Grendel and others).

dr Karolina Pospizil-Hofmańska (University of Silesia in Katowice, Faculty of Arts)

Lost Space, Memory Space. Rural and Semi-rural Areas in Contemporary Upper Silesian Literature

Rural and semi-rural areas are not only an important part of Upper Silesia, but also an important element of the world presented in the latest Upper Silesian literature written in Polish, Czech and Silesian (texts created in various variants of Silesian or multilingual texts). The ethos of peasant work related to the village, the bond with the land and the relationship to tenure are also pillars of the identity of the heroes of stories and novels written especially in the southern part of the region (works by Eva Tvrdá, Anna Malcharková, Petr Čichoň, Aleksandra J. Ostroch). But elements of "rurality" also appear in texts on industrial space - then they are an important background of events or support, a symbol of ties with the past, but also with nature or - more generally - with the universe (e.g. Szczepan Twardoch, Aleksander Nawarecki, Zbigniew Kadłubek, Helena Buchner, Mirosław Syniawa). These two visions of rural significance and importance seem so different that they should not be considered together – although, in addition to the obvious differences resulting from the different development of parts of the region belonging to different countries, there are also many similarities. These include the relationship between cultural/ethnic identity and green space (villages, semi-rural areas), maintaining at least remnants of the relationship with rural life (animal husbandry in the city, home vegetable gardens), a description of changes leading to the irreversible change of way of farming and/or loss of the specificity of "village" (such as the transformation of a village into a suburb) and the feeling of losing an earlier way of life and part of ancestral identity. The last of the mentioned elements - loss - is also associated with the experience of grief and the search for redress, using old documents or creating / searching for places of memory.

Mgr Tomasz Gęsina (University of Silesia in Katowice, Faculty of Arts)

Imagined images of the Wisła in the works of Jerzy Pilch

Jerzy Pilch was born in 1952 in Wisła – a place he always returned to in his prose. This town, located in the Silesian Beskids, became one of the most important inspirations for Pilch in constructing his literary reality. Interestingly, not only did the writer see the unique character of these lands, but also their complicated history. Theoretical and historical contexts help to present the region as an imaginary space, in which the Wisła, a real place, functions as a half real, half fictional town. Begins with the reconnaissance of space category in literary studies and its contemporary version – geopoetics – and the history of the Cieszyn region the paper will examine the imaginary images of this town, which in Pilch's work functions as two original toponyms - Granatowe Góry and Sigła.

dr hab. Zoltán Németh, prof. UW (University of Warsaw, Faculty of Modern Languages)

Village, Language, Subordination (The Case of Szilárd Borbély)

In Hungarian literature, there is a tradition of works that present the village, the countryside, the fields as an area of poverty, vulnerability, inhuman relations, prejudices. These include literary sociography of the 1930s, the novel *Chudobka* by Zsigmond Móricz (1941), *Tvrde maslo* (2003) by Kriszta Bódis, *Deviaty* (2006) by Ferenc Barnás, *Mal by si spať* (2014) by Tibor Noé Kiss. In the poetics of these works, a problem of a linguistic nature appears: how can a village be represented through the language of the village, is there a possibility for that at all? The study deals with the interpretation of the concept of the village, the relations of subordination of the inhabitants of the village and the language and poetics in which these issues are represented - especially in the works of Szilárd Borbély.