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Roma in Children's and Young Adult Literature in Slovakia

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This paper presents the first systematic overview of the artistic production of Romany authors in literature for children and young people in Slovakia in the context of its three developmental stages – from the 1930s until the end of the 1950s, from the beginning of the 1960s until 1989, and from 1989 to the present. Simultaneously, the study points out the contemporary socio-economic conditions of Roma people's life in Slovakia that are perceived as causes and consequences of their complicated process of self-identification, emancipation, and cultural self-realisation in Slovak art for children and young people. The paper highlights the beginnings of several Roma authors, who, in their poems, prose, and dramatic creations for children and young people, revived traditional motifs of Romany folklore (songs and folktales) about love and the ancient longings of Roma people for happiness, freedom, and liberty. Thus, they created the conditions for the forming and continuous development of Roma literature for children and young adults in Slovakia.

Keywords: production of Romany authors, literature for children and young people, periodisation, socio-economic conditions of Roma people, Roma in Slovakia

Reflection on the culture, arts, and literature of Roma people has recently gained a new dimension in the process of their social, cultural, and artistic integration into the plural, majority society of Slovakia. Roma people, from the view of non-Roma, are a specific and peculiar ethnic group which has its own culture, language, traditions, customs, and norms of social behaviour and co-existence and which, not only in the real but also in the literary world, preserves archetypal characteristics of its Romany identity (*romipen*). In artistic images, Romany characters acquire a kind of specificity and otherness in relation to other literary characters just because they are Roma, i.e., of

a different origin and social status, representing a different lifestyle and specific axiology. As a result, the attention of literary scholars and the reading public increasingly focuses on the Roma issue and its portrayal in literature for children and young people in Slovakia. Roma literary texts are becoming a tool for understanding the otherness of Roma people, i.e., their behaviour, acting, thinking, feeling, lifestyle, and life philosophy.

The aim of the paper is to present the first systematic overview of the artistic production of Roma authors for children and young people in Slovakia, which is interpreted on the basis of the specificity and otherness of Roma characters, the literary and historical development of literature for children and young people, as well as on the basis of the socio-economic conditions of the life of the Roma ethnic group in Slovakia, which we perceive as the causes and consequences of the complex process of self-identification, emancipation, and cultural self-realisation of the Roma in Slovak art for children and young adults.

Roma folklore, traditions, perception of the world and life philosophy are an integral part of typical Roma identity (*romipen*) that is preserved in the community from generation to generation. According to Milena Hübschmannová (1988), the term *Romipen* has many meanings. *Romipen* represents not only Roma culture, tradition, mentality, but also compliance with some unwritten laws, such as generosity, support, and cohesion among Roma people, etc. However, Roma people are not all the same, and a Roma proverb says, "A hundred Roma, a hundred habits" (Stojka & Pivoň 2003). According to Mária Vágnerová (1999), Roma identity might be identified based on anthropological characters (the people show a distinctness of face and appearance; they act as an apparent confirmation of the total difference), but also based on ethnic signs (their own language, norms, values, culture, traditional way of life), which distinguish the members of the minority from other social groups, especially the majority. Elena Lacková also confirms the specificity of Roma people (1992: 94):

Us, Roma people, we are particular. Inimitable. It is necessary to understand our inner selves, our hearts. We are different from the majority not only by the colour of our skin, anthropologically, but we differ by our inherited temperament and other characteristics that make us, Roma people, real Roma. Our Roma heart cannot be recreated.

In the context of contemporary Slovak literature for children and young people, there comes to the fore the specific literature type by Roma and non-Roma authors, who attempt to include, non-violently, the Roma identity into literary arts. This trend raised our interest in original and translated production of Roma and non-Roma authors for children and young people in Slovakia. According to Slovak literature scholar Peter Liba, Roma art is characterised by the fact that it (1992: 5–6):

[...] exceeds the borders of own ethnicity, the borders of a nation, and state [...]. It is necessary, besides Roma art itself, to follow its reflection and portrayal also in national cultures and literatures.

The author also expresses his interest in exploring Roma culture, arts, and literature (ibid):

We have to be interested not only in myths, anecdotes about Gypsies, Roma, jokes, lamentations, wishes, tales, and legends, but also in memories, carols, magic and ballads, but in the current present, also original poetics, prose and drama.

We agree that besides the Roma oral literature, it is necessary also to understand written Roma literature, and, through it, also the social environment of the Roma people, their behaviour and actions, thoughts and feelings, i.e., everything that is related to Roma culture and its perception. The mentioned facts confirm the timeliness and factual importance of our interest in the production and works of Roma for children and young people in Slovakia.

In the literary-historical overview of the position of the Roma people in literature for children and young people in Slovakia, we use the term *Roma literature* (written in the Slovak or Slovak-Romany language), which is understood as original “intentional” (addressed to the child recipient) and “non-intentional” (originally not addressed to the child reader, but adopted and read by children and young audiences) (Kopál 1997)¹ poetic, prose, and dramatic production of Roma authors, as well as Slovak or Slovak-Romany translations of books for children and young people. Roma literature follows traditional Romany folklore, which is one of the most characteristic ethnic determinants of Roma people. We can agree with Tibor Žilka that Roma literature is (1987: 35):

[...] a result of the specific portrayal of reality, culture and traditions of Roma ethnicity within a certain territory; it is identified by elementary communication aspects: the reflection of reality, building on tradition, representation of an author’s subjectivity and continuous respect of the reader.

Results from literary-historical research on the original and translated production of Roma authors for children and young people in Slovakia (written in the Slovak or Slovak-Romany language) (Hlebová et al., 2011) are presented in the context of the first two defined historical milestones in the development of Slovak literature for children and young people according to literature historian Ondrej Sliacky (1997): the first period: the 1930s to 1950s, when Roma literature for children and young people did not exist; the second period: from the 1960s until 1989, when the production began of Roma authors, who in their poetic, prose and dramatic works revived traditional motives of Romany folklore (songs and folktales) about love and the ancient desire of Roma people for happiness, freedom and liberty. Sliacky defined his periodisation of children’s and young adult literature on the basis of the formation of diverse literary genres in intentional (addressed to the child recipient) and non-intentional literature (originally not addressed to the child reader) in Slovakia since the 1930s. It lays the foundation for an overview of the identified works of Roma authors for children and young adults. Consequently, we present the difficult process of the beginnings and

¹ The Slovak literary scholar Ján Kopál (1997) defines literature for children and young people (children’s literature) as either intentional, intentionally written for the child reader, and non-intentional, written for the adult reader, but also suitable for children and young readers, i.e. “that part of literary production which corresponds to the reception of an age-defined and differentiated circle of recipients of children and young people” (1997: 15).

gradual promotion of diverse literary genres of fiction by Roma authors, against the background of the development of Slovak children's and young adult literature and the socio-economic conditions of Roma life in Slovakia from the 1930s to the present day.

This study presents the literary production of Romany authors and the specific artistic portrayal of Roma in the body of literature under consideration, as well as the variety of genres, particularly in the period from 1930s to 1950s and in the period from the 1960s until 1989. The social-economic conditions of the lives of Roma people in Slovakia in these specific historical contexts are considered as causes and consequences of their complicated process of self-identification, emancipation, and cultural self-realisation in Slovak art.

The intensified efforts of the Roma to express themselves after 1989 were influenced not only by new socio-economic conditions but also by the adoption of the Constitutional Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities (Act 184) (1999), and the Memorandum rómskeho národa [Memorandum of the Roma Nation] of 1991 (cf. Memorandum... n.d.).² The cultural, social as well as professional artistic activities of the Roma people in Slovakia inspired us to observe the specific self-identification of Roma in various literary genres addressed primarily to young readers in the second period of the development of Romany literature for children and young people – from 1989 to the present. Romany literature for children and young people is represented by original intentional and unintentional production of poetry, prose, and drama of Romany authors, as well as Slovak or Slovak-Romany translations of the books written by Romany authors of world literature (Hlebová 2010, 2011, 2020; Hlebová et al. 2011). Romany literature and literature about the Roma people in Slovakia have become a research area of many authors, in terms of literary history, theory, and the critique of literature for children³ in terms of literary theory, and criticism of Romany literature,⁴ and in terms of compiling a selected bibliography of Romany literature, as well as of Slovak and world literature containing Romany characters.⁵

Between the 1960s and 1989, in their poetry, prose, and drama, various authors introduced traditional motifs of Romany folklore (songs and fairy tales) about love

² The Constitution of the Slovak Republic of 1992, Article 12, section 2 regulates the equality of all citizens, regardless of nationality, religion, belief, or social origin. Articles 34 and 35 regulate the right of national minorities to learn the state language, the right to establish and maintain educational and cultural institutions, to receive information in their mother tongue, the right to use their mother tongue in official communication, to participate in decision making in matters affecting national minorities and ethnic groups, and also the Principles of Government Policy of the Slovak Republic in relation to the Roma (*Ústava Slovenskej republiky* 1992). See also Memorandum rómskeho národa (1991).

³ In particular, Ondrej Sliacky, both individually (1990, 1997, 1999, 2005) and in collaboration with other researchers (Sliacky et al. 1979, 2005, 2007, 2009), Zuzana Stanislavová (1998, 2003, 2009, 2011), as well as Viera Žemberová (1994a, 1994b, 2000).

⁴ Peter Andruška (2000), Bibiána Hlebová (2009, 2010, 2011, 2020; Hlebová et al. 2011), Milan Jurčo (1997), Peter Liba (1992), Pavol Plutko, Bohuslava Vargová and Viliam Zeman (1992), Radoslav Rusňák (2011), Svatava Urbanová (2004), Tibor Žilka (2008).

⁵ Eva Kolivošková (1995), Valéria Farah (2000a, 2000b).

as well as the eternal desire of Roma people for happiness, freedom, and liberty. The third period of development (1989 to the present) is characterised by a quantitative and qualitative increase of Romany authors in Romany literature – representatives of the older and current generations, as well as Slovak and Slovak-Romany translations of books written by Romany authors of world literature. The quantitative increase of Romany writers is also reflected in the genre diversity of Romany literature (pamphlets, collections of poems and songs, collections of Romany folklore, anthologies of Romany fairy tales, collections of modern authors' fairy tales, short stories, novellas, novels, or genre literature), while Romany fairy tales (*paramisi*) became dominant. It seems as if Romany authors confirmed that “the wealth of Roma is a unique world: the world of the fairy tale” (Andruška 2000: 166). Since ancient times, the motifs of their everyday life have therefore been reflected in fairy tales.

The period of development in children's and young adult literature (1930s–1950s)

It is from historical sources (Korim 2006) that we learn that during the period of the first Czechoslovak Republic, settled, nomadic, and itinerant Roma people were not considered to be an ethnic group. Strict evidence of all Roma people was accompanied by discriminating restrictions and police jurisdiction, which was not in accordance with the ideals of liberty and equality of all citizens regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity, and the principles of a legal state. Roma people settled in Roma camps where the cheapest labour could be found, especially in construction, road maintenance, or agriculture, while only a few worked as musicians or craftsmen. Nomadic Roma people traded in horses, dealt with “magic” and fortune-telling, worked as smiths, boilermakers, potters, tinkers, and women occasionally worked for food or old clothes. They also begged and, quite often, stole. The low social status of Roma people in our country was exacerbated by the anti-Roma legislative of Nazi Germany, which led to reprisals and the Roma holocaust during World War II. The discrimination of Roma people, according to René Lužica (2002: 33), was promoted by the citizenship law, which divided citizens into state citizens (formally these could also be settled Roma people who had acquired Slovak nationality) and foreign elements, to which the nomadic Roma belonged. Discrimination and persecution also confronted Roma people in Roma settlements (their dwellings were near public and state roads, and they faced forced eviction to city peripheries). Thus, the isolation of Roma from the majority population deepened. At the time, in the academic publication *Slovak Homeland Studies III*, Anton Stefánek characterised Roma as (1945: 95):

[...] pariahs in a mid-wild, savage, state, similar to animal life [...]. Roma is a poor worker, lazy, unsteady, untidy, and undisciplined.

In this period, there was a violent interruption of the adaptation process of Roma and an extinction of traditional Romany craftworks, intensifying their cultural and

social backwardness. Simultaneously, there also emerged mutual animosity between Roma and non-Roma.

From the historical context, it follows that in the first developmental period (1930s–1950s) the conditions in Slovakia were not appropriate for the social and cultural self-realisation of Roma people. As there is no record at this time of Roma authors who would portray in their works images of Roma lives, we can confirm that Roma literature for children and young people in this period did not exist (Hlebová 2020).

The period of development of children's and young adult literature (1960s–1989)

The second developmental period of Slovak literature for children and young people relates to the beginnings of Roma literature for children and young people in poetic, prose and dramatic works of Romany authors (Hlebová 2011, 2020). The efforts of Roma intellectuals, who developed various activities for the exercise of the human rights of Roma ethnicity, in artistic activities, too, were a positive influence. In the gallery of the discovered Roma authors of literature for children and young people in Slovakia, we have recorded that three of them acquired a university education, namely **Dezider Banga** (1939–2022) in 1963 and **Ján Berky-Luborecký** (1940–2004) in 1966, both at the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava, and also **Elena Lacková** (1921–2003), in 1969, at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague. These authors were active in the field of education of Roma, specifically Banga as a secondary-school teacher, Berky-Luborecký as a university teacher, and Lacková as an edifying worker for Roma in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Simultaneously, they were the first Roma who dealt with literary production for children and young people. In this period, Banga acted as a collector of Roma folk literature, both prose and drama, and also cooperated with Czechoslovak television in Košice. Lacková wrote the first theatrical play about the lives of Roma for adults. Literary production for children and young people by Roma authors, that is, Berky-Luborecký and Lacková, was found only in the third period, after 1989.

The efforts of the mentioned Roma representatives were also met with understanding and support in some non-Roma communities. In this regard, three significant personalities stand out, significantly contributing to the development of Roma literature for children and young people, not only in this, but also in the following period (1989 to the present). The first is the Czech author **Milena Hübsmannová** (1933–2005), who, after graduation in the study programme Hindi, Bengal, and Urdu languages at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague in the Czech Republic (1956), worked as a professor of Roma and Hindi language. She also became a co-founder of Romology in Slovakia. It was the Hindi language that led her to the Roma language. The gradual extinction of the tradition of Roma narrators of long tales (*bare paramisa*), the language assimilation of Roma, and the fear of the total extinction of the Roma cultural heritage caused authors, from as early as this period, to start to be more active in the field of Roma

literature and culture. Even in this period, this author became known as a collector of Roma folklore in Slovakia and Czechia (cf. Hübshmannová 1988), which was published in book form, as well. In the field of Roma literature and culture, Hübschmann was active as a writer, translator, and dramaturge in the Roma amateur theatre *Romen* in Sokolov, as an editor of *Romano džaniben* [Roma Leadership], a journal of Roma studies in the Czech Republic, as a co-worker in *Romano nevo ľil* [Romany New Paper] (an independent cultural-social weekly of Roma in Slovakia, which is published in Prešov) in Slovakia, and as a propagator and literary theorist of Roma literature and culture. She contributed to the field of Roma language codification and in the composition of a dictionary and grammar of the Roma language, and also studied the onomasiology system of the Roma language. Hübschmann dealt for the whole of her life with Roma people and provided moral support for their Roma identity, travelled extensively and familiarised herself with the original homeland of Roma in India (in 1959, 1969, and 1990), and in the last years of her life (she died tragically in 2005 in Africa) voluntarily accepted Roma nationality (Hlebová 2020).

In this period, **Daniela Hivešová-Šilanová** (1952–2008), a Slovak poetess and writer, started to show her personal and professional interest in Roma. After graduating in the field of the Slovak language and aesthetics (Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava, 1976), she worked in Bratislava. After 1989 she started to deal professionally with Roma and their self-identification in the artistic area, as a poet and prose writer for children and young people, and also for adult readers, as the editor-in-chief of *Romano nevo ľil*, as a co-founder, dramaturge, and director of the Roma theatre Romathan in Kosice (1992–1995), also as a pedagogue at a secondary art school in Košice, and since 1991 also in the function of head of the association Jekhetane/Spolu [Together], located in Prešov. Hivešová-Šilanová was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 as one of two Slovak women (Hlebová 2020) for her lifelong work within the worldwide project “1000 women”.

The third significant non-Roma representative is the ethnologist **Arne Mann** (1952), who, after graduating from university (Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava, 1978) started work at the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Science in Bratislava in 1983, and, in parallel, pursued a career as a university teacher at the Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague and at the Faculty of Education, Jan Evangelist Purkyně University in Ústí and Labem. He dealt with research on the culture and lifestyle of Roma in Slovakia, particularly since 1985, when he started to cooperate in the research project titled *People from Roma Genesis*. The object of his interest was the ethnographical research of Roma, especially the demographic problems of their ethnicity. He contributed to the development of Roma culture through research on Roma crafts and traditions, and published his results in journals and books. Arne Mann is also a co-founder and member of numerous foundations with a focus on Roma children and culture; since establishing *Romano nevo ľil*, he has also been its active collaborator (Hlebová 2020).

Literary creations of Roma authors

The most significant author of Roma literature in the second development period in Slovakia is the Roma poet, prose writer and dramatist **Dezider Banga**, who published his first poems for adult readers in the journals “Mladá fronta” [Young Front] and “Krok” [Step] and in the book collection *Dúfam, že nevyrušujem, Eva* [I Hope I Am Not Disturbing You, Eva] (1963), where he introduced himself as an atypical and mature writer. He published another piece for adults in 1964, a book of Slovak translation of Roma folk poetry titled *Pieseň nad vetrom* [A Song Over the Wind], which consisted of 42 Roma songs about desires, passions, grief, and light-hearted cheerfulness and the strong emotional bond between Roma and nature. According to Pavol Plutko, the author was searching in Roma folklore for (1992: 22):

[...] a source of inspiration, [...] a natural base for artistic creation, the genetic anchorage of Roma ethnicity, its armorial characteristics, which differentiated them from other nationalities and cultures.

According to Karol Seman, in his unintentional work, the poet “implements a harmonising, lyrical, romanticizing, beautifying approach towards the reality of Romipen and Roma people, the sense of satisfying beauty” (1992: 16).

The intentional prose work of Banga is represented by his book of Romany folktales (*paramisa*) titled *Čierny vlas: Cigánske rozprávky* [Black Hair: Gypsy Folktales] (1969), which were collected and literarily processed by the author, and thus he contributed significantly to making a specific Romany folklore visible. From a typological point of view, these epic stories belong (Andričíková 2009: 21):

[...] to magical tales, where good, represented by Gypsies, wins over various forms of evil with the help of supernatural objects, creatures and speaking animals. [...]. From Banga's Romany folktales there radiates modesty, peace, a sense of justice, respect for ancestors and the whole society, advocacy for the poor, but also for a free nomadic lifestyle, catchy and cheerful playing on the violin, characterising the whole Roma society through folktale protagonists.

Banga introduced the nature of Roma people through positive artistic images of great heroic acts of Romany characters as individuals as well as a collective Romany hero. In this period, Banga also paid attention to dramatic production – he processed folktales in the form of television broadcasts for children.⁶ The personages included adult and young Romany protagonists marked by poverty and unjust social conditions, but also by a desire for happiness and belief in a better life. From 1969 until 1978, Banga worked as a playwright for Czechoslovak television in Košice, where he prepared episodes with Roma themes (Hlebová 2011).

⁶ *Epaš* [Epaš] (1969), *Buroviarko* [Buroviarko] (1971), *Barborkin pavúk* [Barbara's Spider] (1972), *Čierny vlas* [Black Hair] (1972), *Rozprávky z dlane* [Tales from a Palm] (1972), *Tehliar a kráľ* [A Brickmaker and the King] (1972), *Slimáčik Bubienok* [Snail the Drum] (1977), *Dievča s ružami šlapajach* [A Girl with Roses in her Footprints] (1978), *Rozprávky z lúky* [Tales from a Meadow] (1979).

Authors of poems for the youngest readers are represented by two poetesses. The first is the Romologist **Bohuslava Vargová-Hábovčíková** (b. 1951), who started literary production in the 1960s as a successful participant in students' literature competitions. Gradually, she developed as a poetess of motherhood, love, and family, increasingly inclining towards child readers. According to Plutko (1992), she entered Slovak literature as a member of so-called feminine poetry in the second half of the 1970s. In her intentional poetic production for children and young people, she published bilingual picturebooks for children in Slovak and Czech titled *Je to tak a či tak? = Je to tak anebo tak?* [Is It This Way or That?] (1978) and *Žartovanky = Žertovanky* [Jokes] (1983) with didactic aspects. According to Viliam Zeman and Vasko Kusin, the author totally "succumbed to the art of absurdity" (1992: 39). In her poems for children, she worked with language resources and developed the imagination of the young reader in a witty way (Hlebová 2011).

The second author is **Katarína Patočková-Mrázová** (b. 1971, a half-Roma author), who entered Slovak literature as Katka Vargová. She was not even 9 years old when she became a laureate of the Literary Kežmarok, a Slovak author competition for children aged 9–14. Literary critics noticed in Katka's literary works the attachment of the young author to her mother Bohuslava Vargová, who led author-literary and dramatic groups for children. The young author learnt from her poetic art, just as previously her mother had learnt from Vojtech Mihálik, whose poems were published in the weekly *New Word*.⁷ Patočková-Mrázová started her intentional production with poems for children under the pseudonym Katka Vargová.⁸ She published them later in the book *Ahoj, svet!* [Hallo, World!] (1986). Even from her earliest poems, Patočková-Mrázová launched herself as a rationalistic and reflexive type of poetess, who, in her literary works for children, respected children's points of view, and touched child readers with motifs of everyday life in words and pictures (her own illustrations). According to Karol Seman, "Patočková's poetic maturity breaks the edge of reality in the same way as childhood breaks adulthood" (1992: 44).

Translated literature from the world production of Romany authors

There was only one representative of foreign Roma authors in the period from the 1930s to 1989, and he came from Hungarian literature – **Menyhért Lakatos** (1926–2007). His autobiographical prose for young people and adults, *Füstös képek* [Smoky Pictures], which originally appeared in 1975, was published in a Slovak translation by Alfréd Engelmann, a Slovak translator of Hungarian origin, in 1986, titled *Začadené obrazy*

⁷ *New Word* was a literary weekly that was published from 1944 to 1998, in which the most important Slovak authors were published. Vojtech Mihálik (1926–2001) was one of the most important Slovak poets and translators.

⁸ Her books of poetry include: *Psisko, psíča, pes* [Watchdog, Puppy, Dog] (1980), *Ako mal dáždik malý chvost* [If a Little Rain Had a Little Tail] (1981), *Diktát. Modrovták. Vlak do Trnavy* [Dictation. Bluebird. Train to Trnava] (1981), *Ranný bozk* [A Morning Kiss] (1982), *Mama* [Mother] (1983), *Chcem počuť...* [I Want to Hear...] (1984), *Hladné oči. Ten, kto píše... Hra na rýmy. Z nemocnice. Modrovták. Keby som mohla...* [Hungry Eyes, The One, Who Writes... A Game with Rhymes. From a Hospital. Bluebird. If I Could...] (1986).

[Sooty Pictures]. The author inventively portrays the exotic, colourful, and complicated world of Roma people, their withdrawal, myths, superstitions, and traditions in a story that is authentic and truthful.

The period of development: 1989 to the present

Although the difficult economic and social situation in Slovakia after 1989 and after the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic negatively affected the lives of all members of the Romany ethnic group (through unemployment, social differentiation, segregation of Roma, etc.), the 20th century in Slovakia is considered a period of the Romany National Revival. According to Daniela Hivešová-Šilanová (2002: 145):

Roma people understand their national Roma identity (Romipen) in a global context and in relation to the majority societies in individual countries; they define themselves rather on the basis of the civic principle.

Prejudice and stereotypes directed at Roma by non-Roma resulted from the coexistence of people of different cultures, different ways of life, and different value systems. They have been perceived as traditional representatives of the Romany ethnic group. Roma people were blamed for “living on the fringe of the basic social rules” (Liégeois 1995: 163–164), which were not familiar to them. For countrymen, they were simply nomads without land, for inhabitants of the cities, they were marginalised social cases, workers called them idlers, and most people thought that Roma people were parasites without faith and not willing to obey the law. The non-Roma population thought that Roma people (not only in Slovakia) were thieves, loudmouths, liars, dirty and immoral, and that they were people who did not work and who lived on the fringes of society, reflected in the pejorative designations of Roma as Gypsies, weak, poor and uneducated people. Within homogeneous societies, Roma people are a symbol of extravagance; they can be appreciated because of the talent they have as representatives of Romany folklore. Then the idea coincides with the myth that a Roma man is (Liégeois, 1995: 165 – 166):

[...] a good man, an artist who leads an orderly life, a symbol of freedom that belongs to itinerant folklore groups or theatre ensembles; he dances, sings, plays, organizes circus performances and, after work, he lives in a caravan.

In the third historical period of the development of Slovak literature for children and young people from 1989 to the present, we observe a quantitative and qualitative increase in intentional and unintentional poetic, prose and dramatic production by Romany authors – representatives of the older and new current generations, as well as other Slovak and Slovak-Romany translations of books written by Romany authors of world literature (Hlebová 2020).

Literary works of the older generation of Romany authors

Romany literature for children and young people in Slovakia in the most recent period of development is represented by the older generation of Romany writers of poems and prose, who continue publishing their literary work for children and young

people. One of these authors is **Dezider Banga**. During this period, he compiled three textbooks for Roma children in the Slovak-Romany language mutation: *Geni Barica: Doplnkové čítanie pre žiakov základných škôl* [Geni Barica: Supplementary Reading for Primary School Pupils] (1993a), *Rómsky šlabikár/Romano hangoro* [The Romany Spelling Book] (1993b) and *Maľovaná rómčina/Farbindi romani čhib* [Painted Romany Language] (1997), in which he published several of his poems for children⁹ and a Romany fairy tale “Krajina piatich potokov” [The Land of Five Streams]. The author’s anthology of Romany fairy tales called *Paramisa: Antológia rómskej rozprávky* [The Anthology of the Romany Fairy Tale] (Banga 1992a) also belongs to intentional prose production for young readers, which is compiled as a selection of the author’s fairy tales and literary works of the selected Romany authors (Ján Berky-Luborecký, Helena Demeterová, Milena Hübschmannová, Elena Lacková, József Ravasz, Margita Reiznerová, Zdena Vicianová); the book included tales either in the Slovak or Romany language. Banga presented the Roma people in his fairy tales through positive portrayals of the great heroic deeds of individuals and in the sense of a collective Romany hero. Among Banga’s unintentional poetic works inspired by Romany folklore, the author also published several books of poetry for young and adult readers, dominated by images of the violin, sun, moon, wind, dancing, and cheerful and sensitive singing as an integral part of the Romany life (Hlebová 2011).

Ján Berky-Luborecký also belongs to the generation of the older Romany representatives, who continued publishing literary works for children in the most recent period. The author dedicated the picturebook *Tri ohnivě kone* [Three Fire Horses] (1990) to children, which he created together with the writer Ondrej Sliacky and the illustrator Ondrej Zimka. It is a fairy-tale ballad about a son’s selfless love for his father. The author also produced a small collection entitled *Básne a rozprávky* [Poems and Fairy Tales] (1991), and a bilingual Romany-Slovak poetry collection *Predstavujú sa zvieratká* [The Animals Are Introducing Themselves] (1997), which contains educational poems to present animals to children in a playful way using pictures and rhymes in Slovak and Romany, together with a glossary of seldom-used words. Karol Seman considers the author’s verses as “understandable, pleasant and acceptable for a child of every nationality or ethnicity” (1992: 42).

For schoolchildren, Berky-Luborecký compiled the anthology *Rómska mať* [Roma Mother] (1989), Romany fairy tales published in the books *Sny o šťastí* [Dreams of Happiness] (1994), *Remešina vernosť* [Remeša’s Loyalty] (1998), and humorous stories about Roma people entitled *Dežoviny: Smiechoty zo života Rómov* [Dežoviny: Humorous Life Stories of the Roma People] (1995).

Elena Lacková was the first Romany writer in Slovakia to write in the Romany language. She is a female representative of intentional and unintentional prose production of the older generation of authors. As for literature for children and young

⁹ *Oči detí* [The Eyes of Children], *Rómsky básnik* [Romany Poet], *Tuláci* [Wanderers], *Cesta do Maše* [Journey to Maša], *Lúčenie s ohňom* [Farewell to Fire], *Tulák* [Wanderer], *Motýľ* [Butterfly], *Pastierik* [Little Shepherd].

people in Slovakia, she was one of the best Romany story writers. The book of fairy tales entitled *Rómske rozprávky/Romane paramisa* [Romany Fairy Tales] was published in a Romany-Slovak language version in 1992. In seven stories based on authentic Romany folklore, the author, according to Zuzana Stanislavová (2009: 222):

[...] preserved the archetypal features of the Romany oral literature and its typical motifs: the fate of social couples, the desire for happiness, love of music, singing and dancing, of children, and freedom.

In 1998, a Romany fairy tale entitled *Husle s tromi srdcami/Lavuta trén jílencu* [Violin with Three Hearts] remained as a manuscript; it was translated into Romany by Ján Berky-Luborecký. According to Svatava Urbanová in the context of Czech literature for children and young people, Lacková is considered the Romany Božena Němcová, who “also wrote with her heart and approached some of the fairy-tale motifs and meanings freely, adapting them to the needs of contemporary national society” (2004: 228).

In the context of Slovak literature for children and young people, Lacková, according to Zuzana Stanislavová (2009: 222):

[contributed] to the cultural self-knowledge of the Romany ethnic group as well as the expansion of knowledge about Roma people among the majority population and thus, to the deepening of interethnic understanding.

Jozef Ravasz (b. 1949) also belongs to the older generation of Romany writers of intentional and unintentional poetic and prose production. He is the author of many Romany fairy tales for children. The trilingual (Slovak-Romany-Hungarian) fairy-tale book *Domček v srdci/ Jileskero kheroro/Szívházikó* [A Little House in the Heart] (1992), illustrated by Katarína Fodorová, was his first collection. The author speaks to Roma children to show them the better side of life. At the same time, he calls on them to improve their own lives. The fairy tales are not only about hardships but also about Roma's desire for happiness, love, and a better life. In 2004, the second trilingual book of fairy tales for children and young people under the title *Rómsko/Cigányország/Romano Them* [Romany Country] (in Slovak-Romany-Hungarian) was published, followed in 2007 by another trilingual book for children and young people, *Galéria rozprávok/ Galeria paramisen/Mesegaléria* [Gallery of Fairy Tales], translated into Romany by Viliam Zeman.

Ján Šándor (b. 1948) is another Romany author, publishing his first book for both young and adult readers entitled *Rómsky sen* [Romany Dream] in 2004. In 2006, he issued a collection of short stories, legends, and fairy tales called *Ciglianka* [Ciglianka], based on the legend of the beginnings of coal mining in Upper Nitra. Other stories are based on the lives of Roma and non-Roma people. He writes about love, hate, human anger, and insidiousness in these stories. According to the author himself, love is the most frequent theme of his works. In 2007, he published his third book, *Anjel baníkov* [Miners' Angel], which is about people with difficult and hard lives and their guardian angels. At first glance, the book contains 16 short stories about the history of the Roma people, who had to leave their homeland (India), travelled the world, and looked for

a new place on earth where they could live freely. In these short stories, the author expresses his hope that Roma people will ultimately live a sedentary lifestyle. In one of the final short stories, *Ježiš Kristus a kováč* [Jesus Christ and the Blacksmith] (2007), the author was inspired by the legend about the origin of the Roma nation – about a Romany blacksmith who made the nails used to crucify Jesus Christ. J. Šándor is also the author of the fairy tale for children *Statočný Dežko* [Brave Dežko], which became a model for a musical for children entitled *Princezná Jolanka a smelý Dežko* [Princess Jolanka and Bold Dežko], performed by the Romathan Theatre in Košice in 2005. This fairy tale was published in a new book of fairy tales called *Čierna ruža/E kaľi ruža* [Black Rose] with the subtitle *Rómske rozprávky/Romane paramisa* [Romany Fairy Tales] in 2008 – it is the author's first book for children in a Slovak-Romany language version. In 2009, he published another book of Romany fairy tales entitled *Paramisi* [Story] (Hlebová 2011).

One of the Romany prose writers of unintentional production is **Karol Seman** (b. 1940), the author of the first Romany novella, *Rómsky učiteľ* [Roma Teacher], which was published in an anthology entitled *Rómska matka* [Roma Mother] (Seman et al. 1991). The Romany author Bohuslava Vargová-Hábovčíková, highlighted Seman's strong narrative talent as a literary basis of his prose fiction (1992: 88):

[...] for a deeply philosophical, psychological, and sociological statement about the inner being of the Romany intellectual, who stands at the interface between the world of the White people and the Roma people. The basic dramatizing moment of the work, the level of conflict and its solution, lies in the relationship between a Roma man – non-Roma man, a Roma male intellectual – a natural, uneducated Roma man.

Karol Seman and Bohuslava Vargová-Hábovčíková wrote a radio programme for Roma pupils entitled *Veselá slovenčina* [Happy Slovak] in 1993. Seman also published his works in journals and collections of texts. He dedicated his work, characterised by deep penetration into the psychology and life philosophy of the Roma community, to help educate Roma children and young people (Hlebová 2011).

Ludovít Didi (1931–2013) is another Romany representative of unintentional prose. He is the author of the autobiographical book *Príbehy svätené vetrom* [Stories Sanctified by the Wind] (2004), which, according to Ondrej Sliacky, can be perceived as “the first Romany novel in Slovak literature” (2005: 44–45). A little Roma boy, an illegitimate son, growing up in an extended Roma family is the narrator of the story. Suggestive narration and a diverse and broad range of characters reveal that the author was inspired by his own experiences when writing the stories. Sliacky points out that there are (2005: 44–45):

[...] several Romany writers in Slovak literature who have created cultivated poetic and prose texts, especially for children and young people. If these texts have not become anything more than “cultivated” pieces of work yet, it is because, in addition to the theme, the writers have adapted to the majority literature, to its poetics and optics. In this sense, Ludovít Didi's novel *Príbehy svätené vetrom* is a supreme creative work that tells uniquely of the authentic world of the Romany ethnic group, its misery and suffering, love and death, about the gypsy soul.

An important Romany violin virtuoso, **Ján Berky-Mrenica** (1939–2008), also formed part of Romany literature for children and young people with collections of the most famous Romany songs *Náne odá lavutari* [Who Will Play for Me?] (1993), *Veselo s husličkami po svete* [Merry with Violins Around the World] (2001) and a book on the verbal and musical culture of the Romany ethnic group in Slovakia entitled *Rómske piesne a múdre slová: Notové záznamy a príslovia* [Romany Songs and Wise Lyrics: Sheet Music and Proverbs] (2006), which he co-authored with his daughter Anina Batošová (Hlebová 2011).

In this period of development, we also record three lesser-known Romany authors of intentional and unintentional production of the older generation: **Zdena Vicianová** (b. 1940), who is the author of poems for young people¹⁰ and the collector of Romany folk songs for children.¹¹ She is also the author of Romany fairy tales for children and young people – *Cigánovo zlato* [Gypsy's Gold], *Kam zmizla zlatá krajina Rómov* [Where the Golden Country of the Roma Has Disappeared], *Majster Zoro* [Master Zoro], *Slnko a mesiac* [The Sun and the Moon]. **Helena Demeterová** (b. 1940) is the author of the Romany fairy tales *Prečo je deň a noc/Soske hin ďives the rat* [Why is There Day and Night?] and others,¹² and **Helena Červeňáková** (b. 1939) published a book of collected stories about Roma people, *Trnisté kroky* [Thorny Steps] (1997).

Literary works of the middle and younger generation of Romany authors

Katarína Patočková-Mrázová (b. 1971), who is considered one of the best poets in Slovakia, belongs to the current representatives of the younger generation of Romany authors writing poems and prose of intentional and unintentional production. K. Patočková has devoted herself to intentional prose production for children, which is represented by three mini-short stories published in *Paramisa: Antológia rómskej rozprávky* (Banga 1992a)¹³ and a collection of fairy tales entitled *Dedko Krkoška a kocúr Cézár* [Grandpa Krkoška and the Tomcat Cézár] (1993). According to some literary critics, the success of her work derives from the fact that from an early age she used to encounter “remarkable personalities in a philosophical-poetic environment” (Seman 1992: 44). The author is also known for illustrating poems for children written by Bohuslava Vargová-Hábovčíková entitled *Rómčatá and Rómčence* [Roma Boys and Roma Girls] (1991). Her drawings are refreshing and suitably complement the texts of the poems, thus helping Roma children in the process of learning in a playful and inventive way (Hlebová 2011).

¹⁰ “Deti vetra” [Children of the Wind], “Starý Róm” [An Old Roma Man], “Cigánsky sen” [Gypsy Dream], “Spomienka na Júliu” [Memory of July], “Zalúbeným” [For Those in Love], “Cigánsky plač” [Gypsy Weeping], “Malý huslista” [A Little Violinist] (published in the anthology *Verše z vrbiny* [Willow Verses] (1992).

¹¹ *So žiaľom sa slnko dolu nahýna* [The Sun Bends Down with Sadness], *Zažni mi ohníček dievčatko cigánske* [Light Me a Fire, Little Gypsy Girl].

¹² Published in *Paramisa. Antológia rómskej rozprávky* (Banga 1992a).

¹³ “Strapačka” [A Dumpling], “Muchotráva” [A Toadstool] and “Prečo nemá had nohy?” [Why Does a Snake Have No Legs?].

Edita Rihariová (b. 1963) is another famous Romany representative of prose. She is the author of two fairy-tale books with the biblical theme *O Ježiškovi a jeho priateľoch* [About Little Jesus and his Friends] (2003) and *Malý tučniak: Ako Pán Boh stvoril zvieratká* [A Little Penguin: How the Lord Created Animals] (2008). According to Timotea Vráblová, in the first book, the author (2008):

[...] in her tiny stories did not change the topic of subtle shades of relationships between the heavenly and earthly worlds. The primary focus of her stories are animals – she focused her attention on the principle of creation. [...] The characteristics of the animals are not created stable by God but they are shaped in the process of life, in the reactions of animals to life's challenges and situations. Therefore, there is a constant interaction and mutually intimate dialogue between the animals and the Creator [...].

Other Romany authors of the current generation of intentional production for children and young people include **Jozef Breza** – the author of poems for children “O čom sa kapry rozprávali” [What Were the Carps Talking About?]¹⁴ and “Čo má viac kolies” [What Has Got More Wheels?];¹⁵ **Eugen Brindzák, Jr.**, the author of the popular informational book for children and young people called *Starý rómsky muzikant/Phuro lavutaris* [An Old Roma Musician] (2000), through which he wanted to provide teachers with stimulating teaching material for the multicultural education of young generations; and **Rudolf Mirga** (b. 1968), the author of a poem about the birth of little Jesus, “Šunen, Romale, so pes ačhilas!”/“Čujte, Rómovia, čo sa stalo!” [Listen, Roma, What Has Happened!].¹⁶

Braňo Oláh (b. 1974), the author of the short story *Taký krásny deň* [Such a Beautiful Day] (2005), was inspired by real events in the locality of Kamenná, which is associated with the Roma Holocaust during World War II, after the suppression of the Slovak National Uprising. He is the author of the short story *Vianočná premena* [Christmas Transformation] (2007), illustrated by Ivan Berky-Dušík,¹⁷ and also a fairy tale for children and adults *O dievčatku a jeho čarovnej paličke* [About a Girl and Her Magic Wand] published in 2008 in the magazine *Romano nevo lil* in the section New Prose of Romany Authors. **Jozef Harvan** is another author of Romany fairy tales, e.g. *O múdrej Aranke* [About the Wise Aranka]; *Sedliak and Bieda* [A Peasant and Misery], *O Huslistovi a Pastierke* [About the Fiddler and the Shepherdess] (2007), *O rómskom drotárovi* [About the Romany Tinker] (2008), which the author published in the children's Roma magazine *Luludi* [Flower].

The current generation of Romany prose writers of intentional production for children and young people is represented by the authors of fairy tales, who published a collaborative book called “Paramisa” *Amaro Jilo. Rómske rozprávky* [Romany Fairy

¹⁴ Published in the textbook *Geni Barica: Doplnkové čítanie pre žiakov...* (Banga 1993a).

¹⁵ Published in *Rómsky šlabikár* [Romany Spelling Book] (Banga 1993b).

¹⁶ Published in *Romano nevo lil* in 2000.

¹⁷ Ivan Berky-Dušík is a Roma artist and woodcarver from Zvolenská Slatina. He is the winner of an audition announced by the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno on the topic of the Holocaust. He created a wooden sculpture called *Pieta*, which is part of the museum's permanent exhibition (Berky-Dušík n.d.).

Tales] (2003), namely **Adéla Čurejová**,¹⁸ **Lucia Čurejová**,¹⁹ **Nada Husárová**,²⁰ **Gabriela Patkáňová**²¹ and **Pavol Koky**.²² **Michal Pitko**, one of the current Romany authors of fairy tales, published a book for children entitled *12 rómskych rozprávok* [12 Romany Fairy Tales] in 2004.

Romany poets of unintentional production for young people, who began to publish their poems in the magazine *Romano nevo ľil* in the section New Poetry of Romany Authors, include: **Denisa Havrľová** (b. 1971) – her first poems were published in 2005;²³ **Pavla Cicková** – the author of the short occasional poem in Slovak “Báseň Rómom” [A Poem for Roma] (On International Roma Day), published in 2002; **Miroslav Gergel** (b. 1971) – his first poems entitled “Aj taký býva Róm” [So the Roma Man is Like This] and “Nespútaný sen” [Unchained Dream] were published in 2002, some other poems were published under the common title *Horké sliny* [Bitter Saliva] in 2005,²⁴ and his two poems called “Spi, moja starká” [Sleep, My Granny] and “Slatinský Slon” [An Elephant from Slatina] from 2008 were dedicated to Ivan Berky-Dusík and other young and adult readers; **Maroš Balog** – published his first poem “V osade len nárek ostáva”/“Andro taboris ča roviben ačel” [In the Settlement Only the Lament Remains] in 2002, and the second poem “Svojho blata na nohách stras sa teraz a nie zajtra”/“Hazde pes andral-i peskeri dukhaďi čik” [Shake the Mud Off Your Feet Now and Not Tomorrow] in 2007.

Mária Hušová (b. 1976) – published the poetry cycle *Poézia života* [Poetry of Life] in 2005; **Karol Lazár** (b. 1959) – issued a selection of poetry for young people entitled *Ži s láskou a v láske nechaj žiť* [Live with Love and Let Live in Love] in 2005; **Alena Pustajová** (b. 1965) – her first poems²⁵ were published in 2005; **Milan Berko** (b. 1980) – produced his first poems²⁶ in 2006; **Jozef Červeňák** (b. 1962) – published his first poems *Stuha* [Ribbon], *Na tejto peknej zemi spolu* [On This Beautiful Earth Together] and *Nezabudni na mňa* [Do Not Forget Me] in 2006; **Renáta Berkýová** (b. 1985) – her poems were published under the title *Phares mange/Ľažko mi je* [It's Hard

¹⁸ “Neláskavá mama Lama” [Unkind Mother Lama]; “Ako Rada pre svoju pýchu ostala sama” [How Was Rada Left Alone for Her Pride?].

¹⁹ “Muršoro a kráľ” [Muršoro and the King]; “Boh na nás zabudol” [God Has Forgotten Us].

²⁰ “Agnesa a Šukar” [Agnesa and Šukar].

²¹ “Bachtali a jej poslanie” [Bachtali and Her Mission]; “Džavo a jeho príbeh lásky” [Džavo and His Love Story].

²² “Ako Bango našiel svoje šťastie” [How Bango Found Luck].

²³ “Šumenie detstva” [Rustling of Childhood], “Láska” [Love], “Odpustenie” [Forgiveness], “Autoportrét (Nedorozumenie)” [Self-portrait (Misunderstanding)], “Sveter zo slov” [A Sweater Made of Words].

²⁴ “Dlhá cesta” [Long Journey], “Zrnká” [Grains], “Horké sliny” [Bitter Saliva], “Prízrak spod Michalskej brány” [The Ghost from Michal's Gate].

²⁵ “Mamine ruky” [Mum's Hands], “Prosba” [Request], “Volanie” [Calling], “Pieseň” [Song], “Rómske srdce” [A Romany Heart].

²⁶ “Ráno” [Morning], “Jubox túžob” [A Jubox of Desire], “Nerozhodnosť” [Indecision], “Zabudnúť” [To Forget], “Flegmatik” [Phlegmatic], “Pravda” [Truth], “Poznanie” [Knowledge], “Možno raz” [Maybe One Day], “Rozlúštenie” [Deciphering], “Osud je šálka” [Fate Is a Cup], “Nechápavosť” [Misunderstanding], “Plynutie” [Flow], “Obyčajný deň” [An Ordinary Day].

for Me] and others²⁷ in 2007; **Ladislav Kállay** (b. 1989) – released his first poems under the title *Všade sa ozýva hudba* [There Is Music Everywhere] and others²⁸ in 2007; **Ivan Mirga** (b. 1968) – published his poems *Beštie/E beštiji* [Beasts], *Nahý/Nango* [Naked], *Nevedomie* [Unconsciousness] and others²⁹ in 2007; **Ingrid Rácová** (b. 1970) issued the poem called “Cigánsky sen” [A Gypsy’s Dream] published from the prepared collection of poems *Modlitba osudu* [A Prayer to Destiny] in 2007; **Petra Šarköziová** (b. 1979) – published her poems under the title *Geológia/E geologija* [Geology]³⁰ in 2008. Two new Romany authors who have already published their first collections of poems are **Adriana Szulcsányiová-Kováčová** – a small collection of verses entitled *Spoved’ duše* [Confession of a Soul] (2003) and **Dušan Onody** (b. 1976) – a collection of poems entitled *Venované Tebe, len Tebe* [Dedicated to You, to You Only] (2007), which the author dedicated to “anyone who gets it into their hands and reads it. The poems are intertwined with love, hatred, and pain”. Some of these poems were published in *Romane nevo lil* in 2008, translated into Romany by František Godla.

Poetry books written by the middle and young generations of Romany writers are mostly dominated by sad motifs of Roma people’s everyday life in the majority society. Moreover, the presented motifs are not only about love and friendship, but also about unfulfilled desires and dreams, pains, sorrows, suffering, and the hopeless situations of the Roma people. The leitmotif of the poems are negative feelings and emotions as a reflection of the subjective experience of reality, which is reflected in their titles. Love, friendship, and faith in a brighter future are examples of positive motifs.

Some of the new Romany prose writers of unintentional production for young people, who began to publish in the magazine *Romano nevo lil* in the section New Prose of Romany Authors, are **Jana Ferdinandová** (b. 1959) – the author of the biographical prose *Preskočené detstvo* [Skipped Childhood] (2004), the short stories *Vaska* [Vaska] (2005), and *Matkina spoved’* [Mother’s Confession] (2006); and **Marta Vlačuhová** (b. 1945) – the author of the short story *Ako voľakedy žili naši starí rodičia/Sar varekana dživenas amare phure Roma* [How Our Grandparents Lived] (2009). Among other Romany authors who published prose books, **Ladislav Tavali** (b. 1948) stands out as one of the most important writers. In his first book of short prose entitled *Nemenná krv/O rat pe neparudol* [Unchanging Blood] (2007), the author describes his childhood and the childhood of Roma boys and girls in Sládkovičovo. In his memoirs, the author goes back to the holidays after finishing elementary school. The book was published in Slovak and Romany and was illustrated by Juraj Varga. Tavali published two more books – retrospective prose for young people called *Život rómskych detí/Romane čhavórengero* [The Life of Roma

²⁷ “O apsa” [Tear], “O Roma” [Roma People], “Mira dajorake” [To My Mum], “Imar na rušav pre tute” [I’m Not Angry With You Anymore], “Chocko maškar amende” [Any One of Us].

²⁸ “Keď čítam tvoje pery...” [When I Read Your Lips...], “Až to prebolí...” [When the Pain Stops...], “Aká si...” [What You Are Like...], “Čo je krása ženy” [What Is the Beauty of a Woman?].

²⁹ “Ponuré jazvy” [Gloomy Scars], “Slobodná klietka” [A Free Cage], “Plačúce nechty” [Crying Fingernails], “Zúrivé dotyky” [Furious Touches], “Sloboda” [Freedom].

³⁰ “Dvere”/“Vudár” [Door]; “Samota”/“Korkoripen” [Solitude], “Bezmocnosť”/“Bizorakro” [Helplessness], “Ludia? Svet?”/“Manuša? Luma?” [People? World?], “Láska? Okamplipen?” [Love?].

Children] (2009), illustrated by Juraj Varga, and a prose book for young people *Šúko a Apolka/Romane čhavórengero* [Šúko and Apolka] (2009), in which he explores the idea of friendship and love between Roma and non-Roma protagonists. Between 2010 and 2014, this author published a series of three novels sharing the same title: *Kone za lásku 1/Ograsta vaš o kamiben 1* [Horses for Love 1] (2010), *Kone za lásku 2/Ograsta vaš o kamiben 2* [Horses for Love 2] (2012) and *Kone za lásku 3/Ograsta vaš o kamiben 3* [Horses for Love 3] (2014).

Other well-known Romany prose writers for young people are **Peter Stojka** and **Rastislav Pivoň**, co-authors of the book *Náš život/Amáro Trajo* [Our Life] (2003), in which they reveal “secrets” from the life of Olash Roma men; **František Čureja** and **Peter Ružbarský** who co-authored the book *Duchovný svet Rómov* [The Spiritual World of Roma] (2004); and **Jožo Titus Schön** (b. 1958) who first published humorous and satirical short stories in the magazine *Roháč*, and then a book of short stories called *Povedky* [Stories] (2008) as an edition of the association “Together in Prešov”.

Sad and serious motifs of Roma everyday life in the majority society also appear in the prose production of the middle and young generation of authors, but, compared to poets, the writers of prose more often go back to their ancient past, as if to emphasise the difficult fate and long journey to happiness and the peaceful life of their people, which they have not yet found. The stories about Roma life are highlighted with themes of love and friendship, images of courageous heroic deeds and adventurous experiences, as well as a belief in a brighter and fairer future.

Translated literature from the world production of Romany authors

Czech poetry by two Romany writers has been translated into the Slovak-Romany language in the most recent period: poems for children “Kali ruža”/“Čierna ruža” [Black Rose] and “Romipen”/“Rómovia” [Roma People] (1992) by **Ján Horváth** (b. 1959) and the poem “Troje dvier”/“Trin Udara” [Three Doors]³¹ by **Margita Reiznerová** (b. 1945). Further, poems by **Bronislava Weisová (Papusza)** (1910 – 1987), a Polish poet of Roma origin, were translated into Slovak or Romany-Slovak, such as “Giroli Gili romani Papušakre šerestir uthodi”/“Cigánska pieseň stvorená v Papuszinej hlave” [Gypsy Song Created in Papusza's Head], “Giroli”/“Pesnička” [Song], “Lesná pieseň”/“Vešescri gili” [A Forest Song] and others, and published in the anthology *Verše z vrbiny* [Willow Verses] (Banga 1992b) and also in the textbook *Geni Barica* (Banga 1993a).

Regarding literary prose translation, we have documented three Romany authors representing Czech literature: **Ilona Ferková** (b. 1956) – the author of short stories for young people *Mosařila miro dživipen/Pokazila som si život* [I Have Ruined My Life] (1991) and *Čhorde čhave/Ukradnuté deti* [Stolen Children] (1995), in which she describes Roma children in their homes. Her work is based on real events, because the author herself worked with Roma children at a kindergarten in Rokycany; and **Jana Horváthová** – the author of the main text in the art and science book *Devleskere čhave* –

³¹ Published in the textbook *Geni Barica. Doplnkové čítanie pre žiakov...* (Banga 1993a).

svedectvo starých pohľadníc [Devleskere čhave – A Testimony of Old Postcards],³² which has been translated into Romany, English, and Hungarian. Július Cmorej, who compiled a selection of photographs and postcards, co-authored this publication.

The Romany novelist **Katarína Taikonová** (1932–1995) is a representative of Swedish literature. In her 13-volume autobiography *Katici* [Katica] (2001), the author follows the adolescence of the girl Katica from a Romany settlement and describes the conflicts she experiences with the Swedish majority society; the book was translated into Slovak by Margaréta Karlssonová. The Romany author **Ian Hancock** is a representative of American literature. His Slovak-Romany translation of his book *We Are the Romani People* (2002) was published under the title *My, rómsky národ/Amen sam e Romane džene* [We, the Roma Nation] in 2005. The author not only describes the history of Roma people but also introduces their problems nowadays. In the first part of the book, he introduces Romany culture, customs, and rituals. Moreover, he illustrates common and different features of Roma people in their way of life. The next chapter contains the characteristics of the Romany diet and Romany ideas about health and diseases. In the final chapter, the author manifests himself as an expert in the Romany language, illustrating a selection of Romany proverbs and sayings. Hancock also points in his book to the dark side of Romany history during World War II, which is addressed to both young and adult readers.

Conclusions

After studying the literary-historical sources of the work of Roma authors and the literary genres of artistic creation, we reach the conclusion that Roma literature for children and young adults already has a secure place in Slovak literature and is represented by diverse literary genres (picturebooks, collections of poems and songs, collections of Romani folklore, anthologies of Romani fairy tales, collections of modern fairy tales, short stories, novellas, novels, genres of non-fiction, and schoolbooks and textbooks for Romani children). The most dominant literary form is the fairy tale, which seems to have a deeper meaning; Andruska, claims that (2000: 166):

[...] the wealth of the Roma people is a unique world: the world of fairy tales [...]. For the Roma, the fairy tale became bread and salt, a clear spring of water from which whole generations drank, even though the water flowing through the settlements was often black and muddy.

Based on the periodisation of the history of Slovak literature for children and young adults, we found that in the first development period (the 1930s to the 1950s), suitable conditions for the social and cultural self-realisation of Roma were not by then created in Slovakia. As there were no recorded Roma authors who depicted images of Roma life in their works during this period, we can establish that Roma literature for children and young people did not exist.

³² In translation, it is titled *Božie deti* [God's Children] (2006).

The formation of Romany literature for children and young people in Slovakia took place from the 1960s to 1989, when we found attempts in the works of the analysed Romany authors at the authentic rendition of Roma identity, the lifestyle in the Roma community connected to nature, the revival of traditional motifs of Romany folklore (songs and folk tales) about love and the ancient desire of Roma people for happiness, freedom, and liberty in the artistic portrayals of children and adult Roma characters. The authors of the older, middle and young generations (Dezider Banga, Bohuslava Vargová-Hábovčíková, Katarína Patočková-Mrázová) with the support and recognition of Roma and non-Roma activists (Ján Berky-Luborecký, Elena Lacková, Milena Hübschmannová, Daniela Hivešová-Šilanová, Arne Mann, and others) and representatives of Slovak literary critics lay the foundations of Romany literature for children and young people with their intentional poetic and prose production, whose quantitative and qualitative expansion occurred only after 1989 (see also Hlebová 2020).

The growth of Roma literature for children and young adults in the period after 1989 to the present is connected with the process of self-identification, emancipation and the cultural self-realisation of Roma in Slovak art for children and young people. The most important representatives of Roma literature were the three representatives of the older generation (Dezider Banga, Ján Berky-Luborecký and Elena Lacková), who also worked as university teachers in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and at the same time were the first Roma to engage in poetic, prose and dramatic literary intentional and non-intentional works for children and young adults. Collectively, in this developmental period, we have noted an increase in diverse genres of artistic creation for children and young people by representatives of the emerging Roma author generation; we have identified 60 Roma authors, 52 of them from Slovak literature and eight from world literature (also represented in Slovak translation). The artistic portrayal of Roma people in Romany literature for children and young people represented by Romany authors in the period of development from 1989 to the present is associated not only with the process of the gradual adaptation of the Romany ethnic group to the majority society but also with an awareness of their own ethnicity, which thematically unites representatives of the older and newer generations of Romany poets and prose writers. According to Bohuslava Vargová-Hábovčíková, the literary self-identification of Roma people is characterised by (1992: 33):

[...] a significant moment of preference for the specifics of ethnicity in a more or less positive, optimistic representation, connected with the humanistic essence of the human race; negative moments are presented rather as marginal, illustrative, often with good humour.

Relating to Romany literary production in Slovakia, we have discovered that (Zeman 1992: 38):

Romany literature (in comparison to Slovak literature) is more responsible for performing non-literary functions – ethno-aware, revival, ethno-educational – and at the same time, for identifying with tendencies in the contemporary Slovak, Czech and world literature.

This is also related to the modern situation of the Romany ethnic group, mostly living in isolation in Romany settlements, but also in the psychological isolation of integrated Roma people, who constantly face prejudices, intolerance, and manifestations of racism by the majority society. In the depiction of adult Romany characters, we have identified the authentic portrayal of Romany nature, a simplified way of thinking, feeling, and the Romany way of life related to the idealised images of non-Roma people about their problem-free socialisation in new socio-economic and cultural conditions. Through the depiction of child Romany characters, we have also observed the authentic portrayal of their life in marginalised Romany communities. Romany authors have depicted their social segregation and life in poverty, manifested in an awareness of their otherness and emotional experience of the negative attitudes expressed towards them by the majority society.

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Bibiána Hlebová

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Romi u dječjoj i adolescentskoj slovačkoj književnosti

U radu se donosi sustavni pregled umjetničke produkcije romskih autora u književnosti za djecu i mladež u Slovačkoj u kontekstu njezinih triju razvojnih faza – od 1930-ih do kraja 1950-ih, od početka 1960-ih do 1989. godine te od 1989. do danas. U njem se također naglašavaju suvremeni društveno-ekonomski uvjeti života romske populacije u Slovačkoj koji se prepoznaju kao uzroci i posljedice njihova složenoga procesa samoidentifikacije, emancipacije i kulturnoga ostvarenja u slovačkoj umjetnosti namijenjenoj djeci i mladeži. U radu se ističu početci nekoliko romskih autora koji su svojim pjesničkim, proznim i dramskim ostvarenjima za djecu i mlade oživjeli tradicionalne motive romske folklorne baštine (pjesme i narodne priče) o ljubavi i drevnoj čežnji Roma za srećom, slobodom i neovisnošću. Time su stvorili uvjete za oblikovanje i kontinuirani razvoj slovačke romske književnosti za mlade čitatelje.

Ključne riječi: produkcija romskih autora, književnost za djecu i mlade, periodizacija, društveno-ekonomski uvjeti romske populacije, Romi u Slovačkoj