

SEVERAL REMARKS ON THE FATE OF THE 20TH CENTURY MINORITY SLOVAK IN THE NOVELS OF PAVOL KONDAČ

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Abstract: The paper is based on a general statement on the importance of minority literature in the background of the opposition center - periphery. It emphasizes the viability of cultural efforts of minorities and mentions the specific conditions and forms of their literary realizations. Emphasis is placed on space-time of the Slovaks in Hungary during the turbulent 20th century. The aim of the paper is to point out the personality of Pavol Kondač (1931-2019), whose direct founding cultural-literary effort is still significant in the life of this national minority. The methodological starting point is the presentation of significant novels by this person: the author of the first Slovak novel in Hungary. In the background of the concretized cultural memory of nationality, he emphasizes his texts, in which he follows the tortuous fate of a simple, but also socially significant Slovak in the given chronotope. He focuses not only on the individual but also on the nationality as a whole. He presents various events, attributes, features and aspects which in one way or another (i.e. complexly) influenced the narrower or broader community in the given coordinates.

Keywords: literature, nationality, Slovaks in Hungary, interpretation, Pavol Kondač

1 Introduction

Literature is wherever a word is written, i.e. text - regardless of whether it originates or acts from the geographical or cultural aspect from out of the center or the periphery. In the background, we can say that: *"Strong and developed literatures, which now function as centers of the world literary system, used to be peripheral in the phase of their emergence; without interference with peripheral productivity and the resources of "small" or "minority" literatures, even central literary systems would stagnate. No cultural system is self-sufficient and free of interference. Centrality and peripherality are thus variables that depend on historical dynamics and system evolution"* (Juvan, 2009, p. 181). That is why it is important to identify and subsequently interpret the cultural "fruits" of smaller, marginal, national literatures. Interpretation is important as a combination of the objective and subjective in the background of complex empiric realities, for example *"interpretation will remain what each literary scholar declares it to be, either by definition and explication or by daily praxis. Experience tells me that every attempt to introduce a rational and explicit theory into literary scholarship as well as any demand to legitimate scholarly work in this domain is immediately refused by a majority of scholars as normative and imperialistic"* (Schmidt, 2000, p. 623). For this reason, the individual approach to the literary text behind the experience complex is important.

Privileges are unforgettable in a person's life. It is no different in the case of the cultural development of nationality, which is always specific, characteristic, distinctive, peculiar. This is also known to the Slovaks in Hungary, whose literary beginnings date back to the period before World War II. It was then especially so-called folk authors, who in one way or another established themselves in the contemporary cultural development. However, we have only witnessed the "mature" presence of the literary "spirit" of the Slovaks in Hungary since the late 1970s, when the cult anthology *Výhonky* [Shoots] (1978) was published. The gradual publication of separate book publications from the beginning of the next decade was a kind of natural continuation of individual creative efforts.

2 Coordinates of the first Slovak novel in Hungary as a solid foundation for further cultural development

In this respect, 1984 was an important milestone in the cultural and literary life of Slovaks in Hungary, when the first Slovak novel of this nationality, entitled *Hrboľatá cesta* [Bumpy Path], was published. Its author was Pavol Kondač, who was born on January 16, 1931 in Szarvas in a peasant family (he died on June 14, 2019). Since 1951 he has been the editor of the magazine

Náša sloboda [Our Freedom], which since 1957 (until today) has been published under the name *Ludové noviny* [People's Journal]. He graduated from Gedelov University of Agriculture (Hungarian Gödöllő, 1968). He was originally an agricultural engineer, but since 1977 he has been the editor-in-chief of *Ludové noviny*. At first he created fiction marginally; he started writing sketches and short stories. On the pages of the magazine he edited (but also in the National Calendar), his texts appeared. We register Kondač's prosaic entry into literature since the publication of the anthology *Shoots* (1978, short stories entitled *Rozvod a Útek* [Divorce and Escape], pp. 111-139), then he published a separate collection of short prose *Onemelá izba* [Speechless Room] (1983), followed by the novels *Hrboľatá cesta* [Bumpy Path] (1984) and *Neskory návrat* [Late return] (1987, reissue 2012). It is interesting to note that Miroslav Demák wrote in *Nový život* [New Life] journal (1979, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 91-93) that, judging by Kondač's stories in various proceedings and magazines, the author is well on the way to greater separate work - and so it happened.

This actually ends the bibliographic calculation of Kondač's books. (For the author's brief biobibliographic entry see also: Bartalská, 2001, p. 157). His novel works, however, are *"up-to-date artistic testimonies, which are not deprived of their catchiness and their informative value due to their contemporary conditionality. Nationality meets (and intersects) with human universality. It is a prose about human losses and victories"* (Andruška, 2008a, p. 51).

From the point of view of our topic are also interesting those extracts from *Bumpy Path*, which were published in various anthologies and magazines - for example, the following is published in the proceedings of *Zrod* [Birth] called *Matka a syn* [Mother and Son] (1981, No. 1, p. 67-79), in the anthology *Pramene* [Sources] along with five short stories a text (entitled *Bez súhlasu* [Without Consent], 1982, p. 115-132) and an excerpt can also be found in *Speechless Room* entitled *Kameň zahodený* [Stone thrown away] (1983, p. 106-154). In his later publication, *Od septembra do júna* (Čítanie pre slávnostné a iné príležitosti) [From September to June (Reading for Festivals and Other Occasions)], he presents a short story *Iba po tótsky* [Only in Tóť] (1997, p. 68-70), which is also an excerpt from the *Bumpy Path*.

Naturally, this authorial and editorial approach resulted in the *Bumpy Path* emerging in 1984, which provides a sculptural picture of the key moments of the life of Hungary and Slovak nationality in the space of more than half a century from the 1930s to the 1960s, spatially embedded in the Lowland town of Suchá and partly in Budapest. (Of course, the social events mentioned also stemmed from the political situation in 1918...). It is typical that: *"The humanities are instrumental to human development and happiness and are an integral part of our lives. However, a lack of empirical research limits our current understanding of the role the humanities play in the well-being of individuals, communities, and societies"* (Vaziri, Tay, Keith et al, 2019, p. 695). For this reason too, the interpretation of well-known or less contracted literary texts, which extend knowledge about human being and living (for example of the Slovak minority in Hungary), is again important. Therefore, it is still true that such procedures *"highlight the importance of the concept of national literature, which has not lost its role even in the contemporary literary sciences"* (Pokrivcak - Pokrivcakova, 2016, p. 288). Kondač knew exactly *"how to approach a national topic, which events of life to use for the creation of novel reality, in which national fates are literarily significant and so on. That is also why his literary statements are marked by a distinct patina of art"* (Andruška, 2008b, p. 47). At the center of his attention are the fate of wage laborers, especially Paľo Gajdoš Sr., who is hardworking, fatefully reconciled with fate, but he still falls victim to the cruel social situation of the time. The first part of the novel gives the atmosphere of the

contemporary Hungarian environment in the spirit of realistic prose. In the following sections - we could understand them as separate inserts into the central novel storyline, as in their center is not Paľo Gajdoš Sr., but other characters - changing social conditions changes the space for people's activity. Overall they are "vivid and factual memories of the author about the life of the previous generation" (Zrubec, 1986, p. 59). The dramatic, but also amusing events of the delighted family show sentient readers a sculptural picture of the Lowland Slovaks, their habits and nature. He is particularly sensitive to the social circumstances of life, whose nuances are in close ties with the social context of the time. He thus depicts the life and problems of the Slovak minority in Hungary, dwelling not only on the relationship of intelligentsia from its ranks to the other-national environment in which it belongs, but also to its own origin.

In the novel there is an important place for "mutually pervasive plot and reflection parts concerning the issue of nationality, but no less valuable in this book is the fact that he portrays the Slovak element in close coexistence with the Hungarian environment and inhabitants" (Andruška, 2013, p. 49). The author presents himself as the master of the atmosphere, who can reach for details that determine and are that are typical for that period. The text draws the reader's attention to the various human destinies that take turns to co-create the whole.

At the same time, the author was not only concerned with the personally motivated intention of the writer's self-realization, but also with a culture creating act inspired by national awareness and consciousness of a certain social mission. Kondač is an essential epic author and a lively narrator; his nature manifests itself in the fervent struggle for justice and honor. It is therefore obvious that "he has extensive epic funds ... From his expressive positions he is closer to a realistic epic expression, plotted on a good knowledge of the subject matter and subordination of creative fantasy and fabrication readiness to the deep truth of life" (Tomiš, 1985, p. 85).

The harsh reality of the novel (social insecurity, poverty, humiliation of man in his human dignity, violent collectivization, intergenerational and gender conflicts, decay of the patriarchal way of life) is accentuated by appropriate linguistic-stylistic means. These become the defining features of the whole work. It is also interesting to mention the following idea: "The attribute-laden syntactic of the 'bumpy path' generally indicates obstacles to human life. In the context of the novel, this meaning also applies, but it also extends to new contents as it relates specifically to the fate of Slovaks living in the south-eastern part of Hungary. In this sense, the title of the work can also be understood as a metaphor expressing their strenuous journey through life full of obstacles" (Maruzsová Šebová, 2013a, p. 109). This also implies a basic stereotype of the aggrieved Lowlanders as victims of historical events. Characters are depicted most often in this spirit. Female characters of the novel however "remain in a secondary position, as they are in a closed, patriarchal family. They play the role of a mother-wife, whose job is to take care of the household, the family, and bear the burden of life caused by poverty, social, civil and national injustice" (Maruzsová Šebová, 2013b, p. 322). A wide space is therefore devoted to the unfolding of a story whose initiators and bearers are mainly male characters.

Pavol Kondač's novel is a superbly national novel: it is revealed by descriptions of individual parts of Suchá and its surroundings, geographical names and distinctive lexical units of the Lower Slovak dialects. The author was thus able to effectively present the pre-war situation and the fates of the people in it, when the agrarian laborer was bound to the extreme (in) grace of his exploiters. However, Kondač sees not only conflicts arising from social contradictions; he notes that they also arise from the complex, diverse, and contradictory nature of the people. Meditations of a young Slovak journalist Paľo Gajdoš Jr. extend the novel from the past through the present to the future. This part of the work raises almost all the serious problems of Slovak nationality in Hungary (lack of awareness of belonging, fragmentation, lamentation, ignorance of the standard language).

For Lowland Slovaks, however, it is an important novel both in scope and thematic terms - a work with remarkable composition and linguistic layers. In addition, serious historical events, social transformations and crises (rooted in the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) will come to the attention of a chronologically strictly developing network. While the first part of the novel is dominated by the typical classic ratio of main character and minor characters (nationality – inferiority), in the second part of the work, although it does not lose its central position, it often remains in the background – especially in those cases where details and life sections of the characters. The novel thus becomes in its entirety a "bearer of Slovak national values and identity ... The author is very consciously approaching the question of nationality ... The natural existence of nationality is embedded into objectivity, where the way of life, traditions, customs of the Lowland Slovaks manifest themselves in everyday activities" (Divičanová, 2002, p. 483). On this basis, the identity of the texts and hence the identity of the characters from different aspects "is also necessarily re-interpreted though the new dissemination of literature. For this very reason, in this critical paradigm of the intercultural existence of literature, the concept of literary or cultural transfer has become topical" (Skulj, 2011, p. 291).

3 Traditions, fates and perspectives of man and nationality in the novel *Hrboľatá cesta* [Bumpy Path] (also) in the 20th Century

In the second part of the novel, which takes place after liberation, the atmosphere seems to have gradually disappeared. The writer replaces it with a subjective level, especially with the character world of characters. The natural outer world thus enters the sphere of the conscious inner world.

In the Bumpy Path, the rich means of expression are associated with an adequate vocabulary that aptly typifies the linguistic and communicational habits of the Lowland Slovaks: their openness or inclination to humor and sincerity. The author dives into the dominant literary Slovak language while organically incorporating dialect expressions; uses various book forms and archaic terms. It is therefore challenging to reflect on the status, functions and use of literary proper names in the prose work of Pavol Kondač (For more details: Oďaloš, 2008, pp. 297-301). The author of the prototext selects literary names thoughtfully and deliberately occupies onymic dominants and subdominants with a certain semantic type. Literary names that work in everyday life or are a combination of them do not name persons identical to name holders in reality, because they name the author's characters, such as Jano Bakoš, Jano Havran, Mara Havranová, Paľo Kovalčík, Marika Pákozdiová, Katarína Prievarová, Jozef Slivka, Paľo Urban and so on. The presented literary type dominates precisely in this prose work by Pavol Kondač. Proper names in his prose fulfill four functions: identification-differentiation, epic (plot), characterization and national-representative. The epic (plot) function is fulfilled by literary names in the plot in various relational tasks to other characters or realities, for example in this novel Paľo Gajdoš, Jano Komár, Mišo Prievara guarantee the context and provide the narrative framework of relationships. The reflection of the social context of prose in the titles of works in the form of the attributive dimension of linguistic material also suggests the importance of contributing to the self-knowledge of Slovak nationality and minority life in the Hungarian environment in the Lowlands by means of an artistic word.

The idea of the work is put into the center and around it the author organizes all the elements of the epic structure (the course of the self-awareness process of the poor Slovak peasant Paľo Gajdoš Sr.). Compositional, narrative or linguistic-stylistic homogeneity is also subject to this. At the same time, the writer captures the process of transforming two uneducated village youngsters into educated intellectuals and accompanies their external and internal changes that take place in them. Paľo Gajdoš Jr. starts his career as a journalist, while Janko Korbeľ becomes the director of the Slovak school. Kondač thus showed that as an author he is a good observer and a narrator and has the

feeling to describe the details in depicting the life of the characters.

Pavol Kondač had a vital interest in preserving for himself and future generations everything that the Slovaks created in the Hungarian environment, thereby enriching this environment and how it filled them. He portrays the protagonists as some sort creators of regional history. In accordance with the contemporary reality, he emphasizes the relationship of people to the soil as the only certainty. His efforts to capture as much as possible from the nature of breakthrough-laden times is also evident. Creatively he uses not only epic depictions of relationships between people, but also serious movements in society. It is the work of ideological encounters and struggles for truth. Literary critic István Käfer, however, notices the work of Pavol Kondač in a contradictory way, especially the Bumpy Path, whose analysis is trenchantly critical (For more details see Andruška, 2013, p. 63 et seq.). On the other hand (also in defense) it should be added that Slovak on different sides of the Danube had and has different conditions of its development - and thus "*Slovak in the Hungarian diaspora did not have such development possibilities and retained many preserved elements - Kondač: Bumpy Path*" (Magová, 2013, p. 18; it is the idea of Karol Wlachovský, an expert on Slovak culture in Hungary). The question of whether the Lowland writers master the Slovak literary-artistic language is decisive for the existence of national literature and its entry into the context of Slovak literature (Anna Divičanová). However, Viťazoslav Hronec claims that this is not the case - this aspect is not cardinal. However, we are in favor of the opinion of Anna Divičanová, as the literary context as a whole cannot "suffice" only from the dialectical constructional elements of the text. It is a certain specificity, it is "odd", but not enough in itself. That is why the Bumpy Path is important as a symbol of a kind of contamination of the literary and dialectal, old and new, intellectual, peasant, worker and the like.

The first part of the novel describes the life of a group of reapers who find it difficult to work from dawn to night in wheat fields. The area's attribute gives a natural background to the scythes with the rakes, who have to make a living by hard work. The author compensates this miserable way of existence by their direct human character in the difficult thirties of the 20th century. It describes the world of poverty and duty in 1935. It is (in a complex sense) a time of fire and a day without a drop of water on the count's estate. The author portrays the premonition of the workers behind their fears for the future. Certain certainty is symbolized by the scythe, which is a mystified breadwinner. The combination of nature and the landless people thus creates a simple, yet an effective arc of existence from the reader's perspective. The central character of the novel is Paľo Gajdoš Sr. - a brave and reliable father of four children, who concretises his ambivalent relationship to the manor by gaining at least slightly better conditions for his wards-colaborators. The gradual cruelty and covetousness of the "superior" leads to the realization that the farmer can never trust them. The author describes "subjects" as tenacious people who work for the vision of low earnings and their own country. Soil is holy in this society, for it creates certainty: it gives bread to both children and adults. The deteriorating conditions and the amount of work, however, are the roots of the dissatisfaction of the workers who have to bear the bad contemporary politics themselves every day. They are actually great-grandchildren of Juraj Dóža who are not afraid of cane. In the text, the binary opposition of home and abroad is expressed in the background. The antagonism of the hopeless home and the pauperly abroad is emphasized. The severe economic crisis of the era and its intervention in the lives of the inhabitants of Suchá is described effectively from the reader's perspective. However, they do not hear people crying at the Evangelical Church; it is a world upside down, nationally strained. Gajdoš, as a local (symbolic) peasant leader, is a thorn in the eye of a local power who seeks to physically and mentally undermine a false testimony (especially about the Communists). But Gajdoš is firm, distinctive; favorite in his group of reapers. Lawfulness in the state is like life in front of and behind the mirror. The overall order in the country is therefore highly subjective. Hungarian civil servants are standing by to protect

the political establishment, while they offend poor Slovak workers: "*what would be wrong here, if we allowed you to organize against state power, if we suffered that some individuals here would be politically grouping against us and spreading cross-crumbling communist leaflets where they would attack ... Damn crap! Lousy villains!*" (Kondač, 1984, pp. 17-18). Pain of the soul in these cases hurts more than physical punishment. However, the author also describes it effectively with a strong focus on the social aspect.

In contrast, Kondač points to the luxurious life of the proprietors in the mansion: their destruction or wandering abroad. They are characterized by a saturated way of life (created by operettas and brass band) from the time of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. However, they live an empty life and do not even notice their social or natural surroundings. Yet, to some extent, simple people value them; in their eyes they are enlightened masters. However, this state is only sustainable until the unwritten rule is broken in one direction. "Subject" consider lying to be worse than total contempt. However, as a tame lamb, he has to resist from time to time against such a count who "*from the boredom above the clouds drinks a whole seventh of cognac between the Lower Land and Vienna*" (Kondač, 1984, p. 27). The peasant is symbolized by sweat and Earl caricature (i.e. whip with short hand). Only a Lowlandish summer night symbolically brings some comfort. In this chronotope days are action, but also associated with frequent silence. Days are (nevertheless) dynamic, bearing the foundations of an ideological clash. It escalates at a meeting of Paľo Gajdoš Sr. and Count Tiszahadházy in the forest. This space-time should be characterized by security and a sense of safety. It witnesses the sudden escalation of ancient wrongs and iniquities. Unintentional death brings with it an avalanche of events from the aspect of a poor person who must take responsibility for the death he did not blame. Soil is a great master, for whom it is worth going to jail for several years. From the reader's point of view, though, the ideas of the main character who "*longed to become his own master, a landlord on his own land. For a fraction of a second, he saw himself mowing on his own wheat field*" (Kondač, 1984, p. 41). The trial in Szeged is supported by the encouraging words of the International and the images of the workers' movement (Rákosi, Karikás, Kilián). Kondač puts Gajdoš's fate in parallel with the process of 120 peasants - members of the forbidden Communist Party, who (according to indictment) were initiators and leaders of the organization aimed at forcibly establishing the exclusive dominion of the proletarian social class. The author's vision, however, is slightly one-sided, rising from the contemporary situation. It is surrounded by a symbolic winter, which bites like a rabid dog and vines like a hungry wolf. However, it is important that people bring an example and encouragement to the Lowland wastelands with their shacks. The author emphasizes the unwritten ancient laws of the surroundings, where everything has its exact purpose. The metaphorical place is the rocker well, which hides not only life-giving water, but also the poor body of the suicidal woman due to the "second state" of the count.

A certain culmination of social psychosis is the description of a public hearing by Paľo Gajdoš Sr. during which the dead silence of condolences and compassionate pain is contaminated with skepticism. The author points out the diversity of people who desire not only sensation but also justice. Gajdoš spent his five years in prison reflecting, which is a sign of a certain psychological development. His initial naivety, however, is typical of peasants in contemporary Hungary. The vision of a better life fails in the upstart reaction of the count, who fails to keep his promise and will go far beyond Gajdoš. As a symbol of omnipotence and grobianism, the mansion confronts the poor world of huts. Witness is the dead shoulder of Kereš, which attracts to itself by its harmony. However, it is not possible to make a living, and therefore in the winter, the cottagers must become woodcutters in cane forests. The forest, as a symbol of not only loneliness, but also of encounters, brings darkness both inside and out. However, revenge is gradually reduced, as Gajdoš does not kill the count, but only causes him a fracture of the skull with severe concussion. Escape from one's own

conscience is effectively presented by a description of the natural scenery. However, the black peasant slipper is a clue that determines the social status of a poor person. Purgatory is water, which for a time washes all traces. But Gajdoš's escape is futile - not only court but also cruel politics catch him...

The gradual liberation of the Lowlands is tied to the war years. These are often determined by political prisoners (for example, in the Star Prison of Szeged). Here, too, the author emphasizes the positive characters of the Communists, who have new ideas about the world and gradually endure the prolongation of their pre-trial detention. Their revolt against the current establishment (for example in the years 1937-1939) brought to the surface 100 to 150 indictments. In parallel, Kondač describes the social spirit of the time, the torture and the interrogation of the accused, and Paľo Gajdoš, older than the alleged murderer of count Tiszahadházy, is a direct continuation of this (even historical) political revenge. Everybody is determined, they come together in secret and "foment" even behind bars. There is also mention of the mother tongue, and only "convicts" understand "tót" language ... the almighty ruler regent Miklós Horthy is also mentioned. Poverty stands against him with a united will. At the same time, the strikes of the wage-earners have been described. Once again, the importance of land ownership is emerging, which should belong to the one who cultivates it. However, land reform is an ideal. A simple person must gradually understand the cruelty of the times. Interesting is the mental transformation of Paľo Gajdoš himself from this aspect. His mental ripening is concretized in such a way that he does not mentally confuse himself, seek connections and put his perceptions in order. His gradually developing mental loneliness in prison is also reduced by knowing that he is not ideologically alone. In this way, poverty is actually united and brought together under a common banner. Gradually, hatred of landlords and the idea of revolutionary struggle against them are scattered in prison. The idea of Slavic reciprocity and a kind of thoughtful connection of the Slovaks with the Russians will prevail. They are brothers-liberators, for whom the poor Slovak in Hungary has been waiting for twenty years. Kulaks must be dismissed, because only in this way can the revolution (as expressed in Moscow ...) prevail.

Suchá is described as the centerpiece of military maneuvers. However, the surrounding world of shepherds is gradually changing thanks to American bombers. This period of 1944 brings a cruel toll in the life of the village: the evacuation of the Jewish school and the synagogue and the creation of a ghetto. The author gradually describes the inhumanity of some people who worry more about a dead horse than a living person. It is a time of a symbolic malaria of fear during the fall of black rain not only at Piave, but also at Pest, Szolnok or Suchá. When it comes to bombing, it is interesting, and perhaps even natural, that the lexic and stylistic figures of the characters become more severe: *"The big mistake was that we were poor, but also that we were Tots. – You mean Slovaks, right? Have you also started to use the Tót word? - What else should I use, goddamn? I got used to it. Everybody says that ... What do you have on your school report? Does he speak Hungarian? Yes. Besides that, what other language does he speak? Tót! But that was no longer asked on the school report is whether you were Hungarian or Slovak. Who would care as long as you say out loud that I am Hungarian and I was born to be one, I live in Hungary and I eat Hungarian bread"* (Kondač, 1984, p. 80). The culmination of psychological pressure on the inhabitants is the message of the approaching front of war, which means free looting. A certain starting point, however, is the tireless work on one's own land, which, fortunately, is not subdivided in Suchá; indeed, efforts are made to preserve its integrity through marriages. The description of the fleeing - soldiers-fascists - is almost comical, while the expectation of a new order (i.e. Russian soldiers in the village) is almost idealistic. The news was updated by the broadcast of Moscow radio, but certainty came from the east - from Békéscsaba. The occupation of Suchá by the Soviet army brought the desired peace and new life impulses. Stalin's candles were gradually reduced, and the idea of whom and what was possible to save came to the surface. This is the period during

which: *"People want to live. Even in these unsightly, endless, killing plains. Ringing fills their hearts with hope"* (Kondač, 1984, p. 91). The symbolic death of count Tiszahadházy and the restored free life of Paľo Gajdoš Sr. stand in a kind of symbolic contrast. Thus and then the life of the individual - and thus of the micro-society - starts to move. The author reports the need for everyday hard work. It is a time of proper humility, but also of fear of the present and fear of tomorrow. However, the Soviet military commander of Suchá is described empathically, seeking a common way to improve the village, but also the war-torn living. Brave inhabitants understand the times and understand the arrival of new life. Different times require docile people who are able to organize the whole village in a new social situation. It is interesting to observe the thoughts of Paľo Gajdoš Sr., who unwillingly stands in the middle of events. It combines ideal and real, individual and social: *"Well now perhaps everything will turn to good. In the meantime, you need to relax. Hide from the world. Enough of it was enough. Relax a little, gain strength and then just live and work, as before"* (Kondač, 1984, p. 101). Even nature itself provides adequate scenery for the coming calm, to which Paľo Gajdoš Sr. is also humble (he picks up his hat before the silent morning). Perhaps only in peace comes a new, better, more hopeful life. This is growing by gradual occupation of territories by the troops. In Suchá a commission for soil division is created, but it is a nest of malice. Highlighted are those servants, cottagers, day laborers, who *"were always digging through the land, but never through their own. Only they can represent the will of poverty. Only such a person can and may make a fair decision, having felt the thousand-year-old burning of hunger on the soil on their own skin"* (Kondač, 1984, p. 107). The author effectively describes the external and internal transformation of the village in which the voice of history was heard. Time has returned to the old exact tracks, and the comparison (and outcome) of the two world wars was relentless. The stamp system for important and necessary raw materials was gradually replaced by normal life. However, it was important to guard the tangible and intangible property of the villagers, pulling in one direction for a common goal. The effective part on the decision to allocate land to Paľo Gajdoš Sr. gives a mirror not only of the times but also of human characters. After all, he had no land at all, a sign of the post-war ruling class inconsistency. There is also a variant of magical realism in the text. But where is his work?

Gradually, the point of view in the text shifts to the life stories of Paľo Gajdoš Jr. He is the hope of the family, the vision of a continuous future (his brother was shot by fascists as a 13-year-old in the village street). It describes the new time during *"Slovak children are also allowed to learn. In higher schools. Slovak teachers are reportedly needed. And they are looking for young people, who could not continue their education. Children of poor peasants, landless people"* (Kondač, 1984, p. 121). The author confronts the old and the new world. However, many villagers are skeptical and do not even claim their own mother tongue. They do not like the idea that from September 1945 there will also be a Slovak school in Suchá. However, the symbolic transformation of spade and hoe into a book and tie is cumbersome from a family point of view. Young Paľko's own mother does not want to let go of the unknown despite the prospect of a possible, happier future. The mirage of a later willowy Slovak teacher in long trousers, a gentleman's suit with pantalons and nice shoes with a briefcase is a guarantee of a young person's life security in the eyes of an experienced mother. The young generation, however, does not learn enough Slovak and does not know Transcius. However, there is an opportunity for change after the war. Young people must also be aware of the breadth and depth of the concept of nationality and learn *"not only Slovak, Slovak language, but also awareness. Something so that we can confess to belong to our own sort [fajta]. In the gentleman's language they call it solidarity with one's nationality"* (Kondač, 1984, p. 126).

4 Identity, longing for freedom and historical facts from the objective-subjective point of view of a minority Slovak in Pavol Kondač's novel

The text also mentions the historical realities of 1956: the crowd's chanting against the government, the speech of the first party secretary on the radio, or the roaring masses of youth at the National Museum. It is actually a description of the psychological change of the city. The symbolic act of cutting a new emblem from the center of the flag is a timeless symbol of the desire for freedom. Kondač depicts the individual and social transformation of this purifying and liberating revolution. However, it will also provide readers with a brutal picture of the bloody attacks. The victims hung by the feet testify to the total inhumanity of the time. Witnesses are not only people, but also the "breathing" buildings on Kalvin Square, Museum Ring Road, Rákóczi Avenue or Sightseeing Square. The author stresses the need for deeper reflection on events during which no one can trust anyone - only his own conscience and eyes. It is a time when the voices of simple farmers and workers are bolder. The text also identifies criticism of former emergency barracks, shacks and shame boards; and therefore collectively calling for freedom and justice. Education is also linked to the awareness of the importance of the mother tongue, which is supposed to help to calibrate one's own personality. Being a Slovak is no longer a fault in the new social conditions, but a virtue. On the other hand, there are also skeptical voices of indifferent fellow citizens in the village. This is all the more painful because it is a pseudo-Slovak speaking against his own people: *"After all, not everyone is delighted with all this blasphemy around us. Why is that? To whom is it necessary?, many say, and often out loud. The world does not crumble on who speaks what language. But let's just continue with Hungarian. At least everyone understands that. And whoever did not like to listen to it already left. Moved to Slovakia. And those who stayed here are no longer Slovaks. At least not so real. All he has to do is keep silent, work, and then he can even get around"* (Kondač, 1984, p. 137). Thus, a Slovak must physically and mentally do twice as much work for the benefit of his own nationality and state. Therefore, it is necessary to start from the class point of view. It is new, post-war, "progressive" behavior. The enthusiasm of building socialism goes hand in hand with the ideas of the new political establishment, also thanks to the consistent alliance policy of the party. It can be interpreted that the symbolic statue of Romulus and Remus amid the lowlands and wastelands of the Lowlands - in Suchá - is a vault for a more socially just future. This crossroad of the Post-War Society is similar to the memory of Paľo Gajdoš Sr. about his wrongs. The distrust of the persecuted stands in contrast to the conviction of the Communists. It is the binary opposition of "our" and "their" world, old and new, behind the plow or behind the desk. In the ideas of the young, the 'lousy' earth summons only poverty; a better life is tied to studying. The elderly, however, naturally, due to historical events, relate to their native soil with awe. Soil is a breadwinner, the alpha and omega, because: *"There is nothing else under the sun worthy of sweat and blood, only the earth. You roll the money, you melt the gold, you lose your sense of reason at once, as brick hitting your head, but the earth will continue to feed you"* (Kondač, 1984, p. 156). A simple farmer wants to be disinterested, neutral - just like the state during the historic revolution. He sees the very existence of colonists as a burden; he is afraid of repurchases and sweeping. The first half of the fifties of the 20th century is effectively described in the text with some psychologization: *"And everyone was equally afraid of State Security. No one ever knew who was on their list. But everyone knew their stereotypical text. State security! Come with us. The door of the jeep was open and people were already thrown into it. Most of them didn't even know why they were taking them. And, above all, the State Security did not even bother to explain anything. They just dragged people away"* (Kondač, 1984, p. 165). The official ideology of the period also appears to a large extent in the text: arms into the hands of the people, the establishment of popular courts, order on the basis of the popular establishment. However, the post-war political coalitions will gradually turn into a dictate of one party. The author describes the (counter)revolutionary ideas and actions in

Suchá (organizing the national guard as the guarantor of order). The transition from comrades to fellow citizens testifies to a new "spirit" of the era. The rage of (counter)revolutionaries in Suchá will be stopped by the municipal revolutionary council. Symbolic are also contemporary political decisions: not only the efforts to build a memorial to the fallen in the world wars, but also to pull down the statue of the Turul from the pedestal. It is actually the root of the human intolerance that contemporary Hungarian politics has instilled in its citizens from an early age (these are the Tóts and those are the Hungarians). The stratification of people also went on a confessional basis: the evangelical Slovaks are poor and the Hungarian Catholics rich. In the events of October (1956), the people rose up against the oppressors and wanted to establish justice in the state. Then, at least temporarily, history turned: Communists on Pestian streets and in Suchá persecuted, tortured and wanted to exclude from the micro-territory. He describes these thirteen days as total disruption with confusion not only in the street, but also in the brains. It criticizes hundreds of thousands of refugees who did not seize weapons in their hands but went to serve a foreign power.

The author effectively describes the welter in individual parts of Budapest. After St. Stephen's Square, at the Basilica, at the Eastern Station, the only thing to be sure is the Lowlands route, which is a haven for crazy headlessness and hopelessness. Inside, however, Paľo Gajdoš Jr. does not feel a personality transformation into a bourgeois. He is the son of a village to which he returns heading to Békéscsaba. In his mind, he has the water-masters of Suchá and their beneficial water from Artesian wells as a symbol of the Lowland. It is a world of peace, unsightly plains and threshers. The described memories of his youth in field work warm the reader's heart. The criticism of the contemporary broadcasting of the radio mentally and the vision of the unscrupulous streets in the name of the revolution physically confirm Gajdoš's distance from the city. But he replaced the oily boots with a tie. Interestingly, the fact of an angry crowd is described. His thoughts, addressed to his own "sort" [fajta] (i.e. Slovaks) about the mother tongue, are worthy of thought: *"Love your mother tongue. Learn it and learn in it. And read. For example, a newspaper. About your own life. The past and the present. For all this must be understood so that we can then look ahead. But also explain what needs to be done so that there is real equality between people. Respect your origin, culture and language. Your work"* (Kondač, 1984, p. 202).

On the wider area the question is asked: who is a Hungarian in the Hungarian homeland? It is a long mental journey for a Slovak - similarly as for Paľo Gajdoš Jr. his pilgrimage home to Suchá from revolution torn Budapest in 1956. The author describes a contemporary city full of disputes (pars pro toto in urban public transport). He confronts the city with the village, describing women coming to Budapest to the market. Their costume is a symbol of inertia and native Slovak is a metaphor of persistence. Laughter and defamation due to the use of Slovak indicates a lack of consciousness of the Budapestian people in this period. The physical path of young Gajdoš leads through the Lowland County and Kecskemét, realizing that in the once famous area Slovaks today live in only two smaller settlements. He therefore criticizes the fragmentation of Slovaks in the country. That is why it is difficult to get to them physically and mentally, to talk and to get closer to them. This problem also arises within the nationality itself: *"We, too, have moved away from each other. Not only do we not know each other, but we do not understand our dialects very well either. Our ancestors dragged three of them back to the Hungarian plains two centuries ago. Since then, they got worn out. History has scuffed them. Did our once common language survive the fate of drops in the sea?"* (Kondač, 1984, p. 207). Kondač therefore advocates the need to use a single standard language, emphasizing the inevitable participation of Slovak intelligence in the cultural struggle. (But where to get them from when they moved to Czechoslovakia in 1947?) It must be the bridge that teaches the present, acquaints people with the past and shows the future. This should be helped by a school with a Slovak language of instruction, which will raise its own post-war intelligence. They

should become conscious Slovaks longing for education and reading a good Slovak book. Thus, a Tót gradually becomes a Slovak, a thrown away rock becomes a pulsating national minority. It goes with the development of mother tongue that "is above all a matter of emotion. Emotions. It needs to be loved. Like mom. Like a mother loves her baby. After all, the nationality of man somehow stands or falls on this" (Kondač, 1984, p. 209). Meanwhile, the multi-contextuality of Slovak national literature in Hungary is proclaimed, while the author stresses that it should be written: "In mother tongue. But not just newspapers. Literature. The one we call beautiful. Novels, short stories, nice poems. After all, every nation has its own literature. And its place in world literature" (Kondač, 1984, p. 208). However, for many centuries the feeling of belonging has been ruthlessly plundered from the ancestors, and it is therefore a great task for the young to bring this fire to life. Patterns must be found to give an example to the young post-war generation of their Slovak lives. One such person is mister Havran as a standardized character - a living chronicle of Békéscsaban Slovaks. He recognizes the dialect and reads the Csabian calendar - but not Naša sloboda [Our Freedom] in the standard language. In his family, denationalization is evident, in which grandchildren do not understand Slovak not even fairy tales. The oldest himself is considered to be a sort of a lowlandish Csabian mix of a Slovak and Hungarian, who has to inexorably adapt to monolithic state Hungarian policy on a daily basis. It is important, however, to appreciate his complex wisdom of life "in simple but wise words, all history is hidden. They contain a piece of our past, our presence and variations of the future" (Kondač, 1984, p. 214).

In the case of young people who were in higher education after World War II, the inner voice was refreshed, a kind of distancing from the usual indifference towards their own and collective destiny. However, to create their own personality their environment or surroundings are not enough, but they affect their perceptions, contacts, novelties, education. In the big city Paľo Gajdoš Jr. finds happiness. However, in his parents' thinking the 'spirit' of the old Horthy period is described. Among the young generation the poor years have replaced by the opportunity to educate one's soul. Thus, even the most recent mower in the series became a university-educated journalist. Gajdoš's thoughts on Budapest's Great Ring Road testify that another world has come after the war. The love of the young and their common wandering on the Kiskőrös bridge symbolically marks their arrival to their parents. They bridge courting as an old custom to the present. The inexorable criticism of the next father-in-law consists of a broad spectrum of points, leading to the point that genuine newspapers should only be written in Hungarian. However, the young are enlightened, they want to make their own decisions about their own destiny, and do not want to submit to their "stingy and inflexible" parents who understand the new "morals" as strange expressions of love. It is important, however, to walk together on a bumpy path of life, thus gradually creating the destiny of man and nationality. A marriage before the registrar is also valid as before the sacred image of God; it is not a sin or a fall. Today, it is already a heroic act when after constant humiliation a young bride in Suchá voices her opinion. The times and decades of the 20th century have been changing ... The important thing is the harmony which culminates in the text even when a protestant approaches with a catholic. On the other hand, contemporary agitation (1956) leads to the finding that restoring the order requires a Soviet army that literally saves people's lives. Thus, a simple worker, once landless, gets into the swirl of local politics and comes to the contemporary opinion that the only judge can be the people: whether in Orosháza, Szolnok or Ráb.

At the beginning of the 1960s, the creation of collective farms and the associated agitation of unruly peasants were present in Suchá. The author portrays the Communists as ideologically convinced fighters for truth and bread. They do not believe peasants who are also distrustful of workers and workers do not understand workers' intelligentsia. Only brave work in the cooperative can bring peace from the rage of the 1956 (counter)revolution. Even in the village there are new times

when Mátyás Rákosi, as the father of his homeland, is replaced by the coat of arms of the new state. Patient, mild, open and honest Paľo Gajdoš Sr. is gradually getting to the center of the political and social events. On a wider area, the bright future of the socialist rebuilding of agriculture is debated, where efficiency will increase in large coherent acres. Interesting is the motive of constant agitation at the future entry not only into the cooperative but also the party. This actually specifies the class struggle in the contemporary village, while the author describes a tough clash of opinions that rises from various social statuses. He emphasizes the common, the united, the organized on state land. On the other hand, he expresses evident criticism of contemporary youth, which does not adequately honor the loose land, nor the village as a whole. A brave job is done by Paľo Gajdoš Sr. than a cow-keeper in the cooperative. However, he serves local propaganda. Individual decisions of the political congress are implanted in the everyday life of the village, while the coherence of people on a national basis is already evident. Marginally there is also criticism of state security and information that they beat people "They will drag them away. Even for a few days. Families do not even know where they are, what has been done with them. And they only release them when they give their signature" (Kondač, 1984, p. 254). The bumpy journey becomes more even levelled thanks to the new world, while the love of the elders for the earth does not change. Thus, the past world without goal and truth will comprehensively be replaced by a new social system in which land has also been and remains the most precious treasure and eternal value. The family remains patriarchal, but still bears the roots of the old world. In it, the old and young do not yet understand the importance of land and the mentioned togetherness. This is regionally objectified in the notice board Družstevná obec [Cooperative township]. It is a kind of contemporary novelty; the beginning of another life. At the same time, the author adequately describes the bad premonition or pulsation of tension in the atmosphere of the village. The drummer was replaced by a microphone, the landless by a cooperative, parcels by big factories. Kondač describes the overall bumpy path of formation of cooperatives from the end of World War II through 1956 to the total completion of the rebuilding of agriculture. It criticizes capitalism and refers broadly to the diversity of the villagers and their thinking. It is a period during which the Slovak word in Suchá brought people closer together under the banner of a common goal. The gradual rehabilitation of Paľo Gajdoš Sr. is evident in the social and party-political fields, and from the human point of view it is quite lengthy. After all he will live to see it; he can enjoy three living children. However, he is quarreled with thoughts about his own grandchildren and their Hungarian tongue. Times are changing, but people still need to set a good example. Ondrej Likier Áchim is mentioned as a famous fighter for the rights of the Lowland Slovaks. He should be the model after which the village kolkhoz should be named. He, too, advocated the need for constant education and struggle for one goal: "And this must also happen in this great family. There is also one goal. The same goal. The road leads in one direction. For the benefit of all. That is why it is important now, as before, to scythe at once. In all hands. If they agree on this, their work will reach far. Finally, he will be able to say that he has achieved his life goal. The scythes whistle again - and not in vain" (Kondač, 1984, pp. 293-294). Man dies, but his actions remain. Paľo Gajdoš Sr. dies senselessly in the grip of the wall and the spur, but his example of human bravery and dignity remains a striking example for the Slovaks in Suchá, Békéscsaba, Budapest - the Lowlands, Hungary and Slovakia.

After all, the importance of Kondač 's novel increases and is emphasized by the fact that it was the first novel by a Slovak author in Hungary. It remains a work in which the author documents not only the maturity of his nationality, but above all "its deep roots. This is the basis on which to build literary and real life. Kondač captured the soul of his national community, and this elevated his prose" (Andruška, 2018, p. 155).

5 Psychological Probe of "Slovak-Hungarian" Thoughts on the Individual and Their Concretization in the novel *Neskorý návrat* [Late Return]

This sentence (perhaps in a graded sense) also applies to Pavol Kondač's next novel, entitled *Late Return* (1987, reedition 2012). In this work, the author raised an important question of (self)identification on the basis of awareness of one's own Slovakness from the position of minority existence. In these coordinates of being in the Lowland, space-time is the end station after a long journey of life; a refuge, a shelter for the main character of the story. The central motif of the novel is a two-way journey (from the sheds to the opera, from poverty to wealth - but also from Budapest to his native Merinčok). The famous opera singer Juraj Majron returns to his mother's grave and birth house. With a psychological "drawing", the author points to the need for "communication" with the late mother, criticizing formalism and petty-bourgeois behavior. After a tedious journey he describes his strange feelings as he returns to the roots, where: *"Having grown old a man longs for home. For the right, family, the fatherly, motherly, in which he experienced the most beautiful moments of youth. Moments that were later suppressed by glory but never extinguished in the hidden depths of the soul. Long muted flames flare again. And they burn, because in vain we seek parents and childhood. They were obscured by darkness that cannot be warded off"* (Kondač, 2012, p. 142). The author also emphasizes the importance of the tradition of ancestors and bygone times with a certain fear. In this way, the past and the present blend together without which there is no future. It is a polemic of the creative Slovak-man with himself in the attribute of inner disorder with the question of his own identity. Dual identity of Slovaks appears in Hungary: Juraj Majron's character is a merger of Slovak and Hungarian language. The birthplace symbolizes the mother tongue (Slovak). Man plants symbolic shoots along the bumpy path of destiny. The roots are engraved in the black Lowland soil during childhood and sprouts sprout during adulthood in the capital. After all, this creates an ambivalent feeling of an aging artist who needs silence after busy moments. The desire for the order of life is present in his soul on the basis of a dispute between individualism and collectivism (individual - family). The shed's loft or rocker well are "holy" attributes of childhood memories. Nowadays, these thoughts are in contrast to the often even philosophical thoughts of extinction after the fall of life. The gradually pausing farmer's life and the image of the low-lying lowland in the ripples of wheat fields lay the basis for the idea of the transience of man-artist.

The text also stresses the need for education in the background of tradition. Patriarchal peasant life is characterized by the social stratification of the village (teacher and pastor as the "soul" of the village). Doubts are only within the human being; people who live in a szállás must behave confidently outside. He is supported by his faith in God, who gives hope to the Lowlands. God's will is determined through the empiric reality of the old women-villagers. Even in these reminiscences, however, a cruel period of World War II occurs. The author points out, on a wider scale, the importance of mastering the Slovak literary language, criticizes the denationalization and emphasizes the need for the unity of the Slovak minority in Hungary. Emphasizes the necessary emotional relationship to the Slovak language; using Juraj Majron's character he describes the real state of contamination of Slovak with Hungarian. It highlights the importance of literature that preserves the testimonies of the past on paper. The birthplace is holy, close to the heart. Even the main character feels best among his own people (a woman with a scarf on her head, a man in a clean costume), who are clinging to the soil. At a symbolic late return to her, Majron feels a painful and exciting feeling. His return is (individually) rare as a drop of water during the hot Lowland summer. The strict law of the region gives it the seal of certainty and (self)preservation, emotions of joy and grief from cultivated land and interpersonal relationships. The body thus becomes one with the soul and creates a symbiosis of precious mankind. Majron's existence in Budapest is interwoven with art education. Despite this prism, the author emphasizes the need for learning and permanently

crafting skills (for Majron it's singing). Gradually, the sense of inferiority was reduced, for fame has become a factor in the life of the (already) world-famous opera singer. The boots were replaced by shoes, dust by asphalt. The hundred-spired Prague, majestic Vienna and elegant Paris gradually formed a counterpart to the open plains of the lowlands from his childhood. However, in this case too, it is necessary to preserve the Slovak identity based on a real understanding of and on grasping chances to succeed in the Hungarian cultural context. The point is, however, that the ancestors of Juraj Majron were Slovaks who taught him to love Slovak and like Hungarian. In his life these two languages constantly appear and create an intricate sequence of events. The task of a Slovak in post-war Hungary was to adapt to a monolithic state policy that had surrounded him since early childhood. The author emotionally describes the meetings of little Juraj with Hungarian in kindergarten and elementary school. In the background, it points to the tolerance of the two languages in the consciousness of individuals. As an example he gives the conscientiousness of Slovak pupils, their diligence and modesty. It also mentions soulful teachers who also taught in Hungarian at Slovak school. With Majron he emphasizes the need for gradual improvement in singing: his encounter with an experienced and educated woman-accompanist shows a certain destiny of fate. Part of this is a man with a creative soul with multiple poles that complement each other. It is important to note that: *"Every man's life is created first and foremost as he directs it. Circumstances, conditions can influence our intentions, our ideas, but first of all we ourselves have to do as much as possible in our own interest"* (Kondač, 2012, p. 89). An independent step into the unknown (human and artistic) future was only the first sprout that did not break even when Hungarian collaborators took over. The author confronts their primitivism with the human aspirations of university listeners of music and singing. They are descendants of scallywags from szálláses, skirmishes like Sándor Rózsa. They express their bravery even during the state of emergency when Budapest turned into a drowning ship. The author effectively describes the retreat of the Germans and the arrival of the Russians. It is a cruel time in which: *"Everyone who lives is suspicious. To everyone. Friends will also become enemies. Good people are evil and vice versa"* (Kondač, 2012, p. 105). Kondač describes contemporary realities: persecution of communists, hiding on the attic, visits from the state security and so on. It is a time in which life can be saved by a friendly word or a sincere look. The uniform is thus "humanized" and at the highest point of every Lowland settlement and town a light beam of hope, life, education - the mentioned path - appears. Gradually, the peace returns to the szállás: the sun warms, the farm-hands (bíreš) feed the farm, the farmwives milk the cows, pulis are jumping around the animals, the pigeons are flying over the hens, the turkeys are overfed with grains. People enjoy peace while vintage activities are being described in full swing. Good Lowland wine (kadarka) is a symbol of persistence. The peasant work associated with the Christian faith creates a solid foundation for the future. It is concretized in the above mentioned way of life of Juraj Majron. His profession became teaching and piano, history and language a weapon. Gradually he crystallized as a classic of domestic and international musical life, which in the memory of the nation and nationality can live on intensively. Just like the memory of the mother on the way to her grave. Just as thanks to this novel, the world of szálláses of the Slovaks in Hungary through the prism of the life and thoughts of Juraj Majron himself.

6 Conclusion

Even on the basis of the above-mentioned attributes, it is clear that they are very important literary facts that testify to *"their character of permanent mobility, evident instability, and constant inventive reformulation of verbal and literary matrices, which means that literary texts ought to be reinterpreted through ever new disseminations of literature. In Skulj's view, in the intricacy of cultural memory and cultural transfers it is necessary to keep records of traces which reestablish continually the singular manifestation of literature in a certain geocultural space"* (Skulj, 2013, special issue). That is why current

approaches to past texts are always helpful. In national being, the mentioned transfer is extremely graded and the given cultural memory is important - even in the space-time of the Slovaks in Hungary.

The author of "our" first novel also has great merit in that "he had the courage to open his soul wide open and lay everything on paper as he thought. To raise a number of our burning problems and to think about them. Not hide to, misstate or distort anything. That's why his novel is exciting and interesting for us" (Papuček, 1985, p. 163). He created it "a sculptural picture of the key moments of Hungary and the life of the Slovaks in it, and thus his novels have a significant cognitive value" (Polónyová, 2016, p. 108).

This is one of the reasons why the above-mentioned novels (with smaller contemporary determinants) represent timeless literary works, which are influenced by objective factors in the lives of individuals' fates. The author consciously used the inner multidimensional sequence (from objective to subjective and vice versa). The positive aspects of these texts are the consistent work with words, the attention to detail, the impact of the episodes, the absence of avoidance of socio-political problems and topics, and the ability to reconcile the language specifics of Slovak enclaves with the requirement to use standard Slovak as the main criterion of art. Kondač's "epic scope is wide, his novels are saturated with rich material of life ... it exposes the national issues in its contradictions ... it captures it in the context of social transformations of society" (Tomiš, 1990, p. 74). That is also why these works are still valid in the Central European context.

In his two novels, Pavol Kondač pointed out the twisting fate of Slovaks in Hungary in the 20th century. Even with hindsight, these are testimonies that reflect the complex national development of Lowland Slovaks from an individual and societal aspect. That is why they still have our attention.

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