

# HOW WE SLOVAKS SEE OURSELVES. STEREOTYPES OF SLOVAKS IN 19<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY TRAVEL LITERATURE

Rastislav MOLDA

**Abstrakt:** *Ako sa vidíme my Slováci. Autostereotypy Slovákov na príklade cestopisnej literatúry 19. storočia.* Štúdia sa zameriava na analýzu autostereotypov Slovákov, ako sa formovali a prezentovali v slovenskej cestopisnej literatúre dlhého 19. storočia (1780 – 1918). V kontexte modernizačných procesov, politizácie verejného života a formovania moderných národných identít v mnohonárodnom Uhorsku autostereotypy predstavovali významný nástroj národno-emancipačného diskurzu. Práca vychádza z textovej analýzy a sleduje najfrekvencovanejšie stereotypné atribúty, ich vzájomné prepojenia a funkcie pri konštruovaní normatívneho obrazu slovenského národa. Osobitná pozornosť sa venuje stereotypom pracovitosti, mierumilovnosti, plebejskosti, trpitelstva, bohobojnosti, pohostinnosti a fyziognomickým predstavám, ktoré slovenské elity využívali na pozitívnu sebareprezentáciu. Cestopisná literatúra je chápaná ako špecifický pramenný korpus, v ktorom sa autostereotypy neuplatňovali iba ako opisné charakteristiky, ale ako aktívne ideologické konštrukcie reagujúce na národnostnú konkurenciu a maďarizačné tlaky. Štúdia zároveň poukazuje na to, že vytváranie pozitívneho autoobrazu bolo sprevádzané negatívnou stereotypizáciou „iných“, predovšetkým Maďarov. Autostereotypy sa tak ukazujú ako dôležitý prostriedok národnej obrazotvornosti, ktorý uľahčoval identifikáciu jednotlivcov s národným spoločenstvom a prispieval k stabilizácii slovenskej národnej identity v 19. storočí.

**Kľúčové slová:** Autostereotypy. Slovenský národ. Cestopisná literatúra. 19. storočie. Národná identita. Národno-emancipačný diskurz.

The long 19<sup>th</sup> century, roughly defined as the period between 1780 and 1918, was a time of fundamental political, social, and cultural change in Hungary. The processes of modernization of society, politicization of public life, and formation of modern nations and national identities took place in an environment of significant ethnic and religious diversity. In this context, the discourses through which individual national elites constructed their own identities, defined the boundaries of the national community, and distinguished themselves from other groups took on particular significance.

Ethnic stereotypes became one of the important tools of this process. As simplified, value-laden ideas about the collective characteristics of nations and social groups, they made it possible to reduce complex social reality and create stable images of “us” and “them.” Since the 1980s, research into stereotypes has also come to the fore in historiography, drawing inspiration from several social science disciplines. One of the centers of historical research on stereotypes can be considered

the German academic environment centered around Hans Henning Hahn,<sup>1</sup> whose methodological and theoretical foundations for the analysis of ethnic and social stereotypes are also significant for research in Central and Eastern Europe. Several historians and social science researchers in Poland<sup>2</sup> and the Czech Republic<sup>3</sup> are also addressing the issue of stereotypes.

In Slovakia, research into ethnic stereotypes has developed mainly in the field of ethnology. The work of Eva Krekovičová,<sup>4</sup> who analyzed stereotypical ideas through folklore texts, especially folk songs, represents a significant contribution.

- 1 The center has published nine volumes of books devoted to research into historical stereotypes. The publications are produced in cooperation with leading scientific institutions in Central and Eastern European countries. In 2007, a monograph was also published, which was the result of cooperation with Slovak experts: HAHN, Hans Henning – MANNOVÁ, Elena. *Nationale Wahrnehmungen und ihre Stereotypisierung. Beiträge zur Historischen Stereotypenforschung (Mitteleuropa – Osteuropa. Oldenburger Beiträge zur Kultur und Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas. Bd. 9)*. Frankfurt a. M. u. a.: Peter Lang, 2007, 536 s.; Pozri aj: HAHN, Hans Henning. *Historische Stereotypenforschung : Methodische Überlegungen und empirische Befunde*. Oldenburg: Bibliotheks und Informationssystem der Carl von Ossitzky Universität Oldenburg, 1995, 209 s.
- 2 WALAS, Tereza. *Narody i stereotypy*. Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury, 1995, 330 s.; BLUSZKOWSKI, Jan. *Stereotypy narodowe w świadomości Polaków*. Warszawa: Elipsa, 2003, 343 s.; JEZIEŃSKI, Adam. Stereotyp Polaka w oczach Ukraińca. In Hroudek, Dominik (ed.). *Slovanství ve středoevropském prostoru. Iluze, deziluze a realita*. Praha: Libri, 2004, s. 92-107.
- 3 BROKLOVÁ, Eva – KŘEN, Jan (ed.). *Obraz Němce, Rakouska a Německa v české společnosti 19. a 20. století*. Praha: Karolinum, 1998, 314 s.; TONCROVÁ, Marta – UHLÍKOVÁ, Lucia (ed.). *Etnické stereotypy z pohledu různých vědních oborů*. Brno: Etnologický ústav AV ČR, 2001, 123 s.; KUBÍŠ, Karel (ed.). *Obraz druhého v historické perspektivě II. Identity a stereotypy při formování moderní společnosti*. Praha: Karolinum, 2003, 208 s.; RAK, Jiří: Bývali Čechové: české historické mýty a stereotypy. Jinočany: H&H, 1994, 148 s.
- 4 We have selected the following studies and publications: KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva. *Mentálne obrazy, stereotypy a mýty vo folklóre a v politike*. Bratislava: Ústav etnológie SAV, 2005, 128 s.; KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva. Medzi autoobrazom a heteroobrazom. In Toncrová, Marta – Uhlíková, Lucia (ed.). *Etnické stereotypy z pohledu různých vědních oborů*. Brno: Etnologický ústav AV ČR, 2001, s. 17-36; KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva. Konštrukcia obrazu „seba“ a „iných“. *Mentálne obrazy, stereotypy a sociálna pamäť*. In *Slovenský národopis*, roč. 50, 2002, č. 3-4, s. 332-342; KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva. Autostereotypy a politické elity. Na príklade Slovenska. In *Národopisná revue*, roč. 11, 2001, č. 3, s. 146-148; KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva. Autostereotypen und politische Eliten (Am Beispiel der Slowakei). In Hahn, Hans Henning – Mannová, Elena: *Nationale Wahrnehmungen und ihre Stereotypisierung. Beiträge zur Historischen Stereotypenforschung (Mitteleuropa – Osteuropa. Oldenburger Beiträge zur Kultur und Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas. Bd. 9)*. Frankfurt a. M. u. a.: Peter Lang, 2007, s. 475-491; KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva. Etnologické reflexie o koncepciách a stereotypoch. In *Slovenský národopis*, roč. 52, 2004, č. 2, s. 163-167; KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva. Od obrazu pastiera v slovenskom folklóre k národnému symbolu. In *Slovenský národopis*, roč. 41, 1994, č. 2, s. 139-152; KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva. Sociálna/kolektívna pamäť a stereotypy – k niektorým metodologickým otázkam. In Marušiak, Juraj – Ferencová, Michaela (eds.). *Teoretické prístupy k identitám a ich praktické aplikácie*. Bratislava: Veda, Ústav politických vied SAV, 2005, s. 51-65.

Other Slovak authors also address the issue of stereotypes in partial studies as well as in more broadly conceived transdisciplinary publications.<sup>5</sup> Scientific journals such as *Forum Historiae*, which devoted special attention to the analysis of stereotypes in 2012, have also addressed this topic.<sup>6</sup> The collective monograph *Nationale Wahrnehmungen und ihre Stereotypisierung*<sup>7</sup> also showed that research into ethnic stereotypes can be carried out using various types of source material.

The aim of this study is to analyze the autostereotypes of Slovaks as they were formed and presented in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Slovak travel literature.<sup>8</sup> Methodologically, it is based on a textual analysis of selected travelogues and focuses on identifying the most frequent stereotypical attributes,<sup>9</sup> their interconnections, and their functions within the discourse of national emancipation. Autostereotypes in travel texts are not understood merely as descriptive elements, but as an active tool of national imagination through which the Slovak elite helped shape the normative image of the Slovak nation in the long 19<sup>th</sup> century. I have already addressed the research topic – the analysis of autostereotypes and heterostereotypes – in several studies<sup>10</sup>

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- 5 KILIÁNOVÁ, Gabriela – KOWALSKÁ, Eva – KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva (eds.). *My a tí druhí v modernej spoločnosti*. Bratislava: Veda, Vydavateľstvo SAV, Centrum excelentnosti SAV procesy, 2009, s. 722; KANOVSKÝ, Martin. Ľudské druhy a ľudská myseľ – kognitívne základy etnických klasifikácií a stereotypov. In Toncrová, Marta – Uhlíková, Lucia (ed.). *Etnické stereotypy z pohľadu rôznych viednych oborů*. Brno: Etnologický ústav AV ČR, 2001, s. 9-16; ŠOLTĚS, Peter: Stereotypy o uhorských Slovanoch v uhorských nemeckých cestopisoch a tzv. štatistikách na konci 18. a v prvej polovici 19. storočia. In Hroudek, Dominik (ed.). *Slovanstvo ve středoevropském prostoru. Iluze, deziluze a realita*. Praha: Libri, 2004, s. 73-92; HOLEC, Roman. Biedny, nešťastný, utláčaný Jano. In *História*, roč. 9, 2009, č. 3-4, s. 49-54.
  - 6 See more: <http://forumhistoriae.sk/02-2012>
  - 7 HAHN, Hans Henning – MANNOVÁ, Elena. *Nationale Wahrnehmungen und ihre Stereotypisierung. Beiträge zur Historischen Stereotypenforschung* (Mitteleuropa – Osteuropa. Oldenburger Beiträge zur Kultur und Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas. Bd. 9). Frankfurt a. M. u. a.: Peter Lang, 2007.
  - 8 For more on the topic of Slovak travel literature, see: ELIÁŠ, Michal. *Púť po otčine*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1981, 104 s.; ELIÁŠ, Michal. *Z cestopisných denníkov štúrovcov*. Martin: Vydavateľstvo Maticy slovenskej, 2010, 245 s.; KLÁTIK, Zlatko. *Vývin slovenského cestopisu*. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1968, 474 s.; MOLDA, Rastislav. *Cestopisné denníky štúrovcov*. Martin: Matica slovenská, 2014, 256 s.; GOLIAN, Ján – MOLDA, Rastislav. *Cestopisné denníky. Zblízka i zďaleka, z monarchie i republiky*. Banská Bystrica: Society for Human studies, 2018, 288 s.
  - 9 For the sake of comprehensiveness in the analysis of ethnic stereotypes, I also subjected other sources relevant to the topic to textual analysis.
  - 10 MOLDA, Rastislav. „... kde Maďarka, tam hnev; kde Nemkyňa, tam faľš; kde Cigánka, tam krádež.“ Utváranie stereotypov o „iných“ v slovenskej cestopisnej a národopisnej literatúre 19. storočia. In *Forum historiae*, roč. 6, 2012, č. 2, s. 147-164; MOLDA, Rastislav. *Obraz žida v cestopisných a národopisných dielach štúrovskej generácie*. In *Slovenský národopis*, roč. 59, 2011, č. 2, s. 184-196; MOLDA, Rastislav. „Náš národ Slovenský jest naposledy nepřestanné pilnosti a pracování oddaný.“ Teoretické koncepcie výskumu historických stereotypov aplikované pri analýze stereotypu pracovitosti Slovákov v 19. storočí. In *Antropowebzin*, roč. 8, 2011, č. 3, s. 193-197.

and a monograph.<sup>11</sup> In this text, I have expanded my findings with an analysis of other travelogues and presented a comprehensive overview of the autostereotypes of Slovaks.

### National character

If we want to talk about Slovak stereotypes and how they shaped national identity, we need to look at the history of Hungary at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was during this period that the term “national character” became increasingly prominent in the discourse of Hungarian intellectuals.

Hungary was a particularly diverse area in which several communities coexisted. These were very different in terms of social class, religion, and especially ethnicity. Above all, the country’s ethnic diversity was reflected in intellectual discourse, through which the idea of the ethnic diversity of the Kingdom of Hungary became widely accepted at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The heterogeneity of the monarchy was also emphasized by contemporary scholars, who described the phenomenon of diversity with the very popular phrase “Europe in miniature.”<sup>12</sup>

From the last third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was generally believed that every nation or branch of a nation or nationality had its own specific and unique national character. This is why encyclopedic, statistical, travel, and other educational literature sometimes included more or less extensive descriptions of national characters.<sup>13</sup> The authors of such literature tried to capture both the physical appearance and mental characteristics of the people they described. Statistical literature, in particular, focused on describing the linguistic, ethnic, religious, class, and socio-economic conditions of the population, as well as monitoring population changes, crime, and migration within the country.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, due to the complexity of the issue, authors were forced to generalize and highlight certain phenomena that did not apply to society as a whole, but nevertheless became symptomatic of the entire group. They thus assigned a national character to the individual nations and nationalities of Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy.

According to the conclusions of contemporary statistical literature, nations and nationalities differed from each other in terms of origin, language, physical characteristics, morals, economic practices, and livelihoods.<sup>15</sup>

11 MOLDA, Rastislav. *Ideálny obraz národa. Stereotypizácia uhorských národností v slovenskej cestopisnej a národopisnej literatúre 19. storočia*. Martin: Matica slovenská, 2015, 280 s.

12 CSAPLOVICS, Johann. *Gemälde von Ungern. Erster Theil*. Pesth: Verlag von C. A. Hartleben, 1829, s. 14; See also: BRTÁŇ, Rudo. Literárna činnosť Jána Čaploviča (1780 – 1847). In ČAPLOVIČ, Ján. *Etnografia Slovákov v Uhorsku*. Bratislava: SPN, 1997, s. 285.

13 MOLDA, Rastislav. *Ideálny obraz národa. Stereotypizácia uhorských národností v slovenskej cestopisnej a národopisnej literatúre 19. storočia*. Martin: Matica slovenská, 2015, s. 9.

14 ŠOLTÉS, Peter. „Európa v malom“. Reprezentácia etnickej rôznorodosti Uhorska v štatistikách a vlastivedných prácach do roku 1848. In Ivaničková, Edita et. al.: *Kapitoly z histórie stredoeurópskeho priestoru v 19. a 20. storočí: pocta k 70-ročnému jubileu Dušana Kováča*. Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV, 2011, s. 216.

15 ŠOLTÉS, Peter. „Európa v malom“. Reprezentácia etnickej rôznorodosti Uhorska v štatistikách a vlastivedných prácach do roku 1848. In Ivaničková, Edita et. al.: *Kapitoly z histórie*

The division of the population, i.e., categorization based on the above differences, resulted in numerous comparisons between nations and nationalities, including comparisons of their national characters. It was precisely the national character and language of the individual nationalities of the monarchy that became the distinguishing features on the basis of which they were later categorized.

The scientific definition of national character and the attribution of certain symptomatic characteristics to nations and nationalities was generally accepted throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and today we can find it in a number of written and pictorial sources.

### **Autostereotypes or The Good Qualities of the Slovak Nation**

In addition to statistical and ethnographic literature, we can also find many Slovak autostereotypes and heterostereotypes in contemporary travelogues. Many members of the national movement – especially young students – wanted to get to know the regions inhabited by Slovak-speaking populations better, so they undertook various trips and journeys there. They then wrote about their experiences, publishing texts about them in newspapers and magazines or even in books. Today, we have a wealth of interesting textual material at our disposal in which Slovaks describe Slovaks.

It is only natural that Slovak authors expressed themselves overwhelmingly positively when characterizing Slovaks. In doing so, they contributed significantly to establishing the opinion of the positive qualities of Slovaks. They perceived and presented them as a hard-working, God-fearing, poor, but at the same time hospitable, oppressed and long-suffering, plebeian, good-hearted, singing people with a peaceful nature and beautiful round faces. Among the national “ailments” they included widespread and rampant alcoholism, but also the fact that other nationalities perceive Slovaks as a nation of tinkers.

The aforementioned stereotypes, i.e., generalizations with a certain emotional charge, were closely related to each other. It is interesting to see how representatives of the Slovak national movement were able to use them argumentatively to create a positive image of Slovaks. For example, hard work and poverty were interpreted in the discourse of the time as a consequence of the natural conditions in the northern counties of Hungary. In the mountainous, rocky, and infertile soil, as this area was described, it was more difficult to grow crops compared to the flat and fertile Lower Lands. The physically demanding work of the people inhabiting the hilly northern regions of Hungary, combined with the inhospitable natural and weather conditions and the need to feed their families, contributed to the Slovak nation being presented as very hard-working. Despite this, it remained poor. When referring to poverty, nationalists sought a certain counterbalance to offset the misery, and thus created an image of the Slovak people as poor and modest, but at the same time hospitable. At the time of the formation of national identities, we find several such connections in the literature of the period. For example, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>

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*stredoeurópskeho priestoru v 19. a 20. storočí: pocta k 70-ročnému jubileu Dušana Kováča. Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV, 2011, s. 225.*



century, the Catholic priest Ján Burian traveled through Orava and published a description of his journey in the magazine *Dom a škola* (Home and School), which was intended for parents, educators, and teachers. Burian writes: “Oh Orava, Orava, how painful you are, I thought,”<sup>16</sup> referring to the difficult living conditions of the Orava people. It is in Burian’s next words that we find positive attributes in this stereotype, when, despite the declared poverty that the author described poetically, the Orava people welcomed him: “[...] to our honor, a turkey was sentenced to death. Anyone who wants to be well entertained should go to the parish in Veľká Ves. But he must be Slovak; Father Laco’s parish is open to sincere Slovaks.”<sup>17</sup> On the following pages of his travelogue, the author stated: “[...] alive in Orava and after death in heaven.”<sup>18</sup>

The well-known and respected scholar Ján Čaplovič also frequently wrote about the hospitality of Slovaks in his literary works. His professional literary work influenced the romantic generation of the national movement. Čaplovič claimed that “hospitality is a national trait of Slovaks. Whenever you enter any house, the hostess will take bread, cut it, and serve it to the guest with a knife. This is commonly referred to as ‘offering bread’. But the hospitality does not end there. The hostess will not forget to offer a glass of brandy and will put bryndza cheese or something else on a plate, depending on what she has at hand.”<sup>19</sup> The author of these lines also mentions generosity in connection with pig slaughtering. According to Čaplovič, these were a type of celebration that demonstrated hospitality. Here, this characteristic no longer appears as a selfless and idealized feature of the national character, because Slovaks “give almost everything to their neighbors. It would be a mortal sin not to give each of them a piece of meat and liver sausage. In essence, however, it is only a matter of depositing, because each recipient will return after their own pig slaughter with the same ‘sautanz’.”<sup>20</sup>

### Slovaks, a peaceful nation

One of the most well-known and frequently used autostereotypes describes Slovaks as a peaceful, dove-like nation.<sup>21</sup> This is an interesting paradox, because according to Ludvík Souček, pigeons are not peaceful creatures at all. Nevertheless, the dove remains a symbol of peace.

16 BURIAN, Ján. Z Turca do Oravy. In *Dom a škola*, roč. 7, 1891, č. 5-6, s. 183.

17 BURIAN, Ján. Z Turca do Oravy. In *Dom a škola*, roč. 7, 1891, č. 5-6, s. 184.

18 BURIAN, Ján. Z Turca do Oravy. In *Dom a škola*, roč. 7, 1891, č. 5-6, s. 185.

19 ČAPLOVIČ, Ján. *O Slovensku a Slovákoch*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1975, s. 67.

20 ČAPLOVIČ, Ján. *O Slovensku a Slovákoch*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1975, s. 67-68.

21 In his book *Obrazový opravník obecně oblíbených omylů*, Ludvík Souček claims that pigeons are not peaceful creatures: „Pigeons are extremely passionate and intolerant. The largest number in which they can tolerate each other is a pair – otherwise they must be at least out of reach of each other’s beaks. Whenever the female leaves the nest, the male behaves rudely and despotically towards her, chasing her, pecking her, and not giving her any peace to drink or eat until she returns to the nest – all this even before mating and laying eggs. On the other hand, they are consistently faithful. Despite their quarrelsomeness, however, they are no match for sparrows.” See more: SOUČEK, Ludvík. *Obrazový opravník obecně oblíbených omylů*. Praha: Český klub, 1997, s. 67.

Many leading figures of the national movement considered peacefulness to be a specific trait and a jewel among all positive characteristics. Already in 1822, Ján Kollár, in his well-known apologetic sermon *Dobré vlastnosti národu Slowanského* (The Good Qualities of the Slavic Nation)<sup>22</sup>, emphasized the peaceful and tolerant nature of the Slavs, and thus also of the Slovaks. He further elaborated on his words and noted: “As far as we know the origins, history, and deeds of this nation, we never and nowhere find examples of harshness, cruelty, or savagery, but everywhere we find a special gentleness, meekness, and peacefulness, so that some, not without reason, have given it the name the dove-like nation, that is, as meek and innocent as a dove.”<sup>23</sup> Due to their peaceful nature, the Slovaks could not harm anyone physically or mentally.

In connection with Ján Kollár’s sermon, new interpretations of its genesis are particularly interesting. Literary historian Róbert Kiss Szemán states in his book *Slovanský Goethe v Pešti* (The Slavic Goethe in Pest) that Kollár was inspired to write his sermon *Dobré vlastnosti národu Slowanského* (The Good Qualities of the Slavic Nation) not only by well-known events in the life of the Slovak Evangelical congregation in Pest, which he personally experienced, and historical and philosophical writings, especially German Enlightenment philosophy, but also by the work of Veszprém canon János Horváth on the religious and moral stages of the ancient Hungarians. The work was published in 1817 in the journal *Vedecký zborník*. By comparing Kollár’s and Horváth’s works, Kiss Szemán discovered that it was Horváth’s work that served as a significant springboard for Kollár’s discipline, which later significantly shaped the stereotypes of Slovaks.<sup>24</sup>

In the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the peacefulness of the Slovaks was emphasized mainly by the fact that they did not use weapons. The inhabitants feared them as much as they feared war. Ondrej Braxatoris, father of the famous romantic poet Andrej Braxatoris Sládkovič, used this generalization as an excuse for the Hungarian invasion of the Carpathian Basin and the collapse of Great Moravia, when the Slovaks abandoned their farms “in the lowlands” “to the warlike foreigners [...] and fled to the mountains, where they built settlements so that they could find shelter and refuge, just so that they could defend their farms and property in peace, without bloodshed [...]”<sup>25</sup>

Stereotypes were also used to explain the unsuccessful Slovak policy on the national battlefield of Hungary. This is one of the reasons why peacefulness was emphasized especially after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, when Magyarization activities intensified. Failures in the fight against Magyarization policy were

22 KOLLÁR, Ján. Dobré vlastnosti národu Slowanského. In Kollár, Ján. *Nedělnj, swátečné i přjležitostné Kázně a Řeči*. Pešt: Trantner-Karoly, 1831, s. 497-524.

23 KOLLÁR, Ján. Dobré vlastnosti národu Slowanského. In Kollár, Ján. *Nedělnj, swátečné i přjležitostné Kázně a Řeči*. Pešt: Trantner-Karoly, 1831, s. 508.

24 KISS SZEMÁN, Róbert. *Slovanský Goethe v Pešti. Ján Kollár a národní emblematicismus středoevropských Slovanů*. Praha: Akropolis, 2014, s. 30-42.

25 BRAXATORIS, Ondrej. Uherští Slováci v Hontskem a Zvolentskem kraji. In Urbancová, Viera. *Slovenská etnografia v 19. storočí*. Martin: Matica slovenská v Martine, 1987, s. 274.

justified by referring to the dovish nature of the Slovak nation, which was unable to fight for equal status or be an aggressor or oppressor.

This dovish nature was perceived as an obstacle to national and social development, something that thwarted national emancipation efforts and prevented the social and economic advancement of the Slovak nation, which, according to intellectuals, was represented mainly by the lower classes of society. Mikuláš Dohnány summed it up perfectly with the words: “My dove-like nation, you are infinitely good, but oh, because of your goodness, you have been trampled on!”<sup>26</sup>

### Slovaks, a hard-working nation

Hard work was one of the stereotypical national virtues that Slovaks prided themselves on. The Slovak elite were duly proud of this trait and wrote about it frequently. According to them, Slovaks were diligent in all professions, both manual and intellectual.

The geographical area inhabited by the Slovak-speaking population was predominantly agricultural with low soil fertility, which required greater effort and care from farmers and fundamentally shaped the stereotype. The climatic conditions were unfavorable for the inhabitants of the hilly northern regions of Hungary, where cold, windy weather prevailed with lower air temperatures throughout the year than in the southern regions of the country. It was these arguments that the intelligentsia most often used to justify the industriousness of the Slovaks. According to them, Slovaks had to exert up to ten times more effort when cultivating their fields; as Mikuláš Dohnány says: “[...] unlike other nations living on the plains, they are not spoiled by their work, they are content with what they have, and they cultivate their rocky fields with the sweat of their brow.”<sup>27</sup>

In various types of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Slovak literature, we find several linguistic constructions presenting Slovak diligence. As a model example, we cite the statements of Ján Čaplovič, Janko Buor, and Jozef Miloslav Hurban: “Where once there were barren sandy deserts, today there are prosperous Slovaks who have infected the entire area with their enterprise and thus done their country a great service.”<sup>28</sup> Or: “The surrounding area may be barren, but hard work and diligence overcome this [...] even though storms and gales often ruin their work, they never fail to repair it a second or third time.”<sup>29</sup> And: “The people are healthy, fresh, and hard-working, and what nature has taken from them, they make up for with diligence.”<sup>30</sup>

26 Literárny archív Slovenskej národnej knižnice (hereinafter referred to as this abbreviation: LA-SNK) Martin, sign. C 860, fond Starý fond – C – Náučné a iné práce. Spoločnosti, Národní povaha Slovákov, s. 3.

27 LA-SNK Martin, sign. C 860, fond Starý fond – C – Náučné a iné práce. Spoločnosti, Národní povaha Slovákov, s. 5.

28 ČAPLOVIČ, Ján. *O Slovensku a Slovákoch*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1975, s. 45.

29 BUOR, Janko. Z cestovného denníka. In Eliáš Michal (ed.). *Z cestovných denníkov štúrovcov*. Martin: Vydavateľstvo Matice slovenskej, 2010, s. 173.

30 HURBAN, Jozef Miloslav. Prehádzka po považskom svete. In Eliáš Michal (ed.). *Z cestovných denníkov štúrovcov*. Martin: Vydavateľstvo Matice slovenskej, 2010, s. 28.



### The round Slovak face

The positive characteristics of Slovaks were naturally applied to other Slavic nations as well. Some of the positive characteristics were taken from a broader set of Slavic stereotypes, or were partially modified by Slovak nationalists to better fit the Slovak context.

A representative example is the generally accepted and widespread stereotype of the round face of Slovaks, associated with Slavic physiognomy. This stereotype was adopted by Slovak nationalists, who very often wrote about the beautiful round Slovak face in their literary works. For example, Jozef Miloslav Hurban, a recent graduate of the Evangelical Lyceum, published a short excerpt from his first travelogue in the Czech magazine *Květy* in 1841. In it, in the context of the stereotype of round faces, he aptly described the female inhabitants of Brno: "I confess that their beautiful skin is truly beautiful; their faces are illuminated by the gentle rays of the setting sun, a natural beauty inherent to all Slavs. Roundness, grace, keen eyesight, black eyes, chestnut hair, expression and dignity in their entire demeanor – all this concentrated in our Brno women, those lovely daughters of the sturdy Moravian tribe, makes us proud of them. We are proud of the beauty of our Slavic sisters."<sup>31</sup> Strongly romantic sentence structures were often used to represent Slovaks.

Hurban's classmate from the Bratislava Evangelical Lyceum, Mikuláš Dohnány, also presented the round face of Slovaks in a romantic spirit in his work *Národní povaha Slováků* (The National Character of Slovaks): "The Slavic face is rounded, enclosing infinity, the forehead most closely resembling an equilateral triangle, his blue eyes (soaring toward God) reminding us of the sky, which is not even imprinted, [emphasis added by Mikuláš Dohnány] nor do they protrude outward, but rather penetrate deeply into the soul of man; his small lips show little sensuality, but rather love and kindness on his face, while on the other hand, his expressive and meaningful eyes reveal his spiritual strength and abilities."<sup>32</sup>

Ironically, this stereotype was broken by Timrava, who wrote about the immobile *Ľapákovci* family and "Paľo with a round face."

### A plebeian nation

It can be said that the autostereotype identifying Slovaks with plebeian members of the lowest social classes, with simple and poor people, most clearly influenced the formation of national identity. At the same time, it played a significant role in the creation of national mythology and in building a positive Slovak self-image in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>33</sup> The identification of Slovaks with the plebeian social classes was not subconscious or unconscious in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it was consider-

31 HURBAN, Jozef, Miloslav. Cestopisné zlomky, od Mil. Jos. Hurbana. In *Květy*, roč. 7, 1841, č. 42, s. 334.

32 LA-SNK Martin, sign. C 860, fond Starý fond – C – Náučné a iné práce. Spoločnosti, *Národní povaha Slováků*, s. 2.

33 In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the stereotype of Slovaks as a plebeian nation was canonized primarily by the prose writer, essayist, publicist, and screenwriter Vladimír Mináč. The Slovak philosopher Tibor Pichler, on the other hand, subjected the concept of Slovaks as a plebeian nation to professional criticism in his book publications.

ably complicated throughout the century. Members of the Slovak intellectual elite viewed Slovaks on two levels. Firstly, Slovaks were members of the broadest peasant and shepherd classes, and secondly, Slovak intellectuals themselves, who simultaneously constructed and presented this identity, were also considered members of this social group.<sup>34</sup>

The creation of the stereotype was also conditioned by the formation of modern nations and the associated ethnic homogenization of Hungary. Already in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the phenomenon of Magyarization was an important psychological factor that stimulated the formation of the stereotype. The assimilation of the polyglot feudal ruling class significantly influenced the formation of the stereotype of plebeianism. The motive for the change in the national identity of the upper classes of society was to maintain their dominant position, even after the transformation of the feudal estate system into a civil society.<sup>35</sup> The Magyarization process thus affected primarily the higher, wealthier, and more educated classes of Hungarian society, who were keen to maintain their social status. As the Hungarianization national ideology promoted a policy of homogenization, those who identified with the Hungarianization process and accepted its emerging national-state identity were given preferential treatment. The assimilation of these social classes into the Slovak ethnic environment created the impression that Slovaks were a plebeian nation, without nobility, burghers, merchants, or intellectuals. Slovak authors naturally reflected on this process and often wrote about it in their literary works, such as travelogues. "[...] I left here with a cold heart and a deep sigh over the denationalization of our nobility, which, intoxicated by unprecedented selfishness, cares only for itself and its family, not for the nation. No European nation has a nobility as corrupt and alienated as ours; in one tribe they became Germanized, in another they became Turkified, in a third they became Magyarized, in a fourth they became Germanized, and in a fifth they became Frenchified or Anglicized."<sup>36</sup> These words were the response of Ján Kollár to the process of change in the national identity of the aristocracy. In the first half of the 1840s, he reacted to the growing process of Magyarization in Hungary. Similar reactions can be found in other literary works. A representative example is the work of the preacher and writer Martin Medňanský, who himself came from a yeoman family. In his text, he reflected on the situation of increasing Magyarization and the change in the national identities of the aristocracy. He compared the situation in Slovakia with that in Poland and found several positives in Poland. According to him, Poles in all strata of society had many enthu-

34 KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva. Mýtus plebejského národa. In Krekovič, Eduard – Mannová, Elena – Krekovičová, Eva. *Mýty naše slovenské*. Bratislava: Academic Electronic Press, 2005, s. 86-87.

35 MESÁROŠ, Július. Maďarizácia a asimilácia v Uhorsku od konca 18. storočia do roku 1918. In *Historický časopis*, roč. 46, 1997, č. 2, s. 302.

36 KOLLÁR, Ján. *Cestopis obsahujúci cestu do Horní Itálie a odtiaľ přes Tyrolsko a Baworsko, se zvláštním ohledem na slawjanské živly roku 1841 konanou a sepsanou od Jana Kollára. S Wyobrazeními a Přílohami též i se Słownikem slawjanských umělcůw všech kmenůw od neystarších časůw k nynějšímu věku, s krátkým životopisem a udáním znamenitějších, zvláště národních, wýtworůw*. Pešť: Trantner-Karoly, 1843, s. 128.

siastic, dedicated patriots. In contrast: “We do not have such men; we do not have magnates, landowners, rich people – we are so poor that our poverty has become a proverb; poor as church mice. We do have outstanding men in the arts and sciences, we have zealous nationalists, we have patrons, but we have no nobility. We have no nobility? We do, we do, but it is degenerate and treacherous.”<sup>37</sup>

The stereotype identifying Slovaks as a plebeian nation was much more clearly shaped by the generation influenced by the romantic view of the nation. The emerging national movement of Romanticism also changed the educated elite’s view of the people. They were no longer the object of interest in the same sense as in the ethnographic works of the Enlightenment generation. The educated young generation focused their attention on the characteristics that defined the nation during the Romantic period. These characteristics were embodied by the lower classes of society. The generation of the national movement associated with Ľudovít Štúr perceived the people as representatives of national characteristics.<sup>38</sup> The interest of the Slovak intelligentsia in the people and their culture was an integral part of the nation-building process. For Slovak intellectuals, the broad plebeian strata of the population were not only an object of research, but also became the prototype of Slovakness. The aesthetics of picturesqueness had a fundamental influence on the idyllic depiction of the common people in the literary works of this generation. Idealized folk classes can be found in several works of the Romantic generation: in Sládkovič’s *Detvan* and in Chalupka’s *Mor ho!*.

The inclusion of the plebeian stereotype in the collection of national self-image is related to the concept of the “true” Slovak, who was identified with the common and simple people, especially shepherds, farmers, and mountain dwellers. For the Romantics, the folk strata of society, with their language and culture, represented the only source of “purity” and “originality” of the Slovak nation. From the 1840s onwards, the young Slovak intellectual elite was characterized by the glorification of the folk strata of society in various spheres of literature and culture, but also in romantic science. Another activity was the collection and recording of folk songs, poems, fairy tales, and dances.<sup>39</sup> Folkloric expressions of the rural classes played an important role in the process of national identification. This process was preserved in Slovak society throughout the long 19<sup>th</sup> century and was still present after the establishment of the first Czechoslovak Republic.<sup>40</sup>

In shaping the stereotype of Slovaks as members of the plebeian classes of society, its visual representation was also essential, because “visual images provide the most

37 MEDŇANSKÝ, Martin. Z ciest. In *Slovenské pohľady*, roč. 8, 1888, č. 7, s. 150.

38 URBANCOVÁ, Viera. *Slovenská etnografia v 19. storočí: Vývoj názorov na slovenský ľud*. Martin: Matica slovenská, 1987, s. 86.

39 KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva. Mýtus plebejského národa. In Krekovič, Eduard – Mannová, Elena – Krekovičová, Eva. *Mýty naše slovenské*. Bratislava: Academic Electronic Press, 2005, s. 86-87.

40 KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva. Od obrazu pastiera v slovenskom folklóre k národnému symbolu. In *Slovenský národopis*, roč. 41, 1994, č. 2, s. 149.

accessible representations of other cultures,<sup>41</sup> including, of course, one's "own" culture. Visual representations of "oneself, one's own" help to significantly reinforce mental images into very stable stereotypes. Frequent depictions of Slovaks in plebeian clothing significantly reinforced the analyzed stereotype. Simple folk clothing confirmed their exceptionality and, at the same time, this depiction reinforced the effort to establish national identity. Slovak intellectuals sought to distinguish national clothing from Hungarian clothing, which was derived from the clothing of the middle nobility. The term "Slovak national costume" referred to clothing that was based on the traditional costumes of the folk classes. Although it was only regional in character, it complemented the image of the typical Slovak. This is one of the reasons why there was considerable interest in adopting this type of clothing and elevating it to the status of national costume. The second factor that influenced the identification of folk clothing with national clothing was that clothing was considered proof of antiquity and originality, as well as a true expression of the national spirit. This is another reason why Slovak patriots sought to make the costume, which was characteristic of a narrowly defined rural and peasant area, representative of the nation. This effort can be seen in the fact that several participants wore Slovak folk costumes at balls in Vienna, Pest, and Slovak cities. Envoys from Slovakia also attended the Slavic Congress in Prague in folk costumes.<sup>42</sup> At the ball there, they publicly manifested the political program of the national movement.<sup>43</sup>

### **An oppressed and suffering nation**

Slovak nationalists considered Slovaks to be a nation that had been oppressed for a thousand years, constantly suffering under social and national oppression. They considered the Hungarians, who were responsible for national oppression, and the Jews, who were responsible for the social enslavement of the Slovaks, to be the oppressors.

In representing the Slovaks as martyrs of national and social oppression, the Slovak elites also had to work with stereotypes of peacefulness, plebeianism, and poverty. It is relatively easy to explain the interconnection between these stereotypes: it is difficult to consider anyone other than a peaceful, simple, and poor social class as a martyr tormented by national and social oppression.

According to Pavol Jozef Šafárik, the Slovaks, as part of the great Slavic nation, were victims and sufferers who were not responsible for their fate and were driven

41 KREKOVIČOVÁ, Eva – PANCOVÁ, Zuzana. Obraz nepriateľa v počiatkoch slovenskej politickej karikatúry. Vizuálne stereotypy v časopise Černokňažník v rokoch 1961 – 1910. In *Slovenský národopis*, roč. 61, 2013, č. 1, s. 33.

42 ŠKVARNA, Dušan. *Začiatky moderných slovenských symbolov. K vytváraniu národnej identity od konca 18. do polovice 19. storočia*. Banská Bystrica: UMB, Fakulta humanitných vied Banská Bystrica, 2004, s. 67-70.

43 ŠKVARNA, Dušan. *Začiatky moderných slovenských symbolov. K vytváraniu národnej identity od konca 18. do polovice 19. storočia*. Banská Bystrica: UMB, Fakulta humanitných vied Banská Bystrica, 2004, s. 97-98.

to suffering by external circumstances.<sup>44</sup> In the 1820s, Šafárik presented the Slovaks under the influence of the idea of a thousand years of suffering under Hungarian rule.<sup>45</sup> This thesis became a generally accepted stereotype of a suffering nation.

The romantic poet and national movement activist Mikuláš Dohnány used his poetic talent and wrote: “You suffer the lashes of the whip for a long, long time, until your insides boil over, your heart is set ablaze with holy fire, and you rise up against your tormentors.”<sup>46</sup> He pointed to the great suffering, but at the same time nurtured the hope of rebellion and punishment of the “enemy-tormentor.” According to Dohnány, the nation represented a positive romantic hero who was to rise up from under the yoke and defeat his opponents. It can be said that in this case there was a conflict between two characteristics of the nation – a long-suffering nation versus a peace-loving nation – because the nation that endured injustice (which allegedly resulted from its dovelike nature) did not rise up against its conquerors, but continued to quietly accept social and national oppression. However, Dohnány adhered to his preconceived notion of a dovish nation, which is why he wrote on the following pages: “My dear nation! You have already suffered greatly, and you continue to suffer and remain good-natured.”<sup>47</sup>

Félix Kutlík, a Slovak writer from Lower Hungary,<sup>48</sup> characterized the Slovak yoke in his travelogue not only directly, when he spoke of undeserved suffering, but also used a very interesting metaphor associated with the symbol of Slavdom – the linden tree: “Truly, no nation has suffered so many blows, mostly undeserved, as the nation that planted fragrant linden trees along roads and in our sacred places. I will lead you along a path lined with beeches, which have taken the place of linden trees; somewhere we will even encounter an abandoned linden tree, a descendant of those benevolent trees under which the weary Slav rested and revived.”<sup>49</sup> In his lecture, Jozef Ľudovít Holuby even compares the suffering of Slovaks in Hungary to slavery: «For centuries, the people endured the yoke of serfdom, which was little different from slavery.»<sup>50</sup>

The stereotype of a long-suffering, oppressed nation appeared frequently in literary works. After 1918, it was transformed through the school system into a myth that is deeply rooted in society and can be decoded by the general public with a basic knowledge of history. Awareness of the existence of a suffering Slovak nation, en-

44 KRIVÝ, Vladimír – MANNOVÁ, Elena. Mýtus obete. In Krekovič, Eduard – Mannová, Elena – Krekovičová, Eva. *Mýty naše slovenské*. Bratislava: Academic Electronic Press, 2005, s. 79.

45 FINDOR, Andrej. Tisícročná poroba? In Krekovič, Eduard – Mannová, Elena – Krekovičová, Eva. *Mýty naše slovenské*. Bratislava: Academic Electronic Press, 2005, s. 71-72.

46 LA-SNK Martin, sign. C 860, fond Starý fond – C – Náučné a iné práce. Spoločnosti, Národná povaha Slovákov, s. 3.

47 LA-SNK Martin, sign. C 860, fond Starý fond – C – Náučné a iné práce. Spoločnosti, Národná povaha Slovákov, s. 9.

48 PACALOVÁ, Jana. Dvojdňové putovanie dolnozemskeho Slováka po slovanskom svete. In Slovenská literatúra, roč. 63, 2016, č. 6, s. 435.

49 KUTLÍK, Félix. „Výlet na Laaland“. In *Pešťbudínske vedomosti*, roč. 8, 1868, č. 63, s. 2.

50 HOLUBY, Jozef Ľudovít. Obrázky zo Slovenska. In *Slovenské pohľady*, roč. 17, 1897, č. 2, s. 84.



slaved for a thousand years, is part of a tradition that is known even without the necessary historical interpretation.<sup>51</sup>

### Slovaks as a God-fearing nation

As early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Slovaks were considered by their elites to be a very religious nation. The aim of the nationalists was to use religiosity to highlight high moral values, thereby compensating for the low social status expressed by the stereotype of plebeianism. Slovaks, as a God-fearing nation based on the Christian faith, were also supposed to be honest, hospitable, and kind-hearted, as commanded by the Holy Scriptures.

The Cyril and Methodius theme was a significant ideological source of the stereotype of a God-fearing nation. This was an important theme in the poems of Bernolák priest Ján Hollý, a poet admired by the younger generation. Hollý contributed to the popularization of this idea with his work *Životopis svätích Cirilla a Metóda* (The Life of Saints Cyril and Methodius)<sup>52</sup> and the epics *Swatopluk*<sup>53</sup> and *Cirillo-Metodiáda*.<sup>54</sup> The fact that the leaders of the Slovak national movement were predominantly Protestant and Catholic priests also had a significant influence on the creation of the stereotype. Between 1780 and 1820, roughly three-quarters of the Slovak intelligentsia active in literature, art, and organization came from the clergy: 40 percent were Roman Catholic priests and 35 percent were Protestant priests.<sup>55</sup>

As with other stereotypical ideas about Slovaks, reality was idealized in this case as well. Members of the national movement pointed to the sincere faith and deep religious convictions and feelings of Slovaks. They demonstrated the important role that religion played in the lives of Slovaks and thus constructed the relevant stereotype: "Our Slovaks are a religious and God-fearing nation; they begin every task, even the smallest, with God, calling on Him for help everywhere. Our people, who are not afraid of hard and difficult work, when they are driven by hardship, vice, and poverty, when they are oppressed by merciless masters, turn only to God, finding comfort and relief for their hearts in Him; in sorrow and sadness, they turn to God. They call Sunday a holy day consecrated to God, on which they are to cease from material and physical work, i.e., not to work, but to think only of Almighty God and soar in spirit. Compare this with the *Hungarian vasárnap*,<sup>56</sup> and you will immediately see the great difference between the religiosity of that nation and ours. God's temples are visited in large numbers in our country, and the good and worthy

51 FINDOR, Andrej. Tisícročná poroba? In Krekovič, Eduard – Mannová, Elena – Krekovičová, Eva. *Mýty naše slovenské*. Bratislava: Academic Electronic Press, 2005, s. 71.

52 HOLLY, Ján. *Dielo Jána Hollého. Sväzok IV. Cirillo-Metodiáda*. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1950, s. 160.

53 HOLLY, Ján. *Swatopluk. Wítazná báseň we dwanašti spewoch od Gana Hollého*. Trnava: Jan Jelinek, 1833.

54 HOLLY, Ján. *Cirillo-Metodiáda. Wítazská báseň w šesťi spewoch od Gana Hollého*. Budiň: Literami Král. Univers. Tlačiarne, 1835, 164 s.

55 Pozri viac: HUČKO, Ján. *Sociálne zloženie a pôvod slovenskej obrodenskej inteligencie*. Bratislava: Veda, 1974.

56 Hungarian Sunday, literal meaning „market day.“

Slovak preacher has nothing to fear that his seed will fall on barren ground; it is accepted and deeply penetrates the souls of our people, teaching them in a manner appropriate to them and corresponding to their national spirit. But how little work has been done in this field so far!"<sup>57</sup> Similar views to those of Mikuláš Dohnány were presented by Miloslava Lehotská, one of the first Slovak women writers: "The Slovak people are immediately believers and begin every work with God."<sup>58</sup> Lawyer and publicist Michal Kiss, author of several philosophical, economic, and political-legal essays published in Slovak and Hungarian periodicals, wrote: "And with God's help, the people live bravely."<sup>59</sup> Specific examples show that, according to the discourse of the time, religion played a very important role in the lives of Slovaks. Faith in God helped them overcome various problems, as well as national and social oppression.

### Conclusion

A significant source of inspiration that influenced the adoption and spread of Slavic and Slovak stereotypes was Ján Kollár's well-known treatise *Dobré vlastnosti národu Slowanského* (The Good Qualities of the Slavic Nation).<sup>60</sup> It was published in several editions and was an accessible article, often read in schools, especially in Protestant lyceums. Students were thus familiarized with the good qualities of Slovaks as presented by Kollár. They adopted them and spread them further in their literary works. Members of the national movement, especially in the first two-thirds of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, who were active as priests, also spoke about them at public events, such as large gatherings of believers at pilgrimages and annual celebrations, or at Sunday services and Holy Masses. Perhaps even Ján Kollár himself did so before the Slovak Evangelical Church congregation in Pest.

By presenting the good qualities of Slovaks, a reality that was more complex was idealized. It is also worth mentioning that representatives of the Slovak national movement used stereotypes about a long-suffering, plebeian, peace-loving nation to justify the unsuccessful and unprosperous activities they undertook as representatives of the nation.

It is important to note that portraying "one's own" in a positive light also means portraying "the others" in a negative light, in this case competitors in national emancipation efforts, i.e., the Hungarians. According to 19<sup>th</sup>-century Slovak discourse, the latter were portrayed as a nation of lazy people, violent criminals, and bandits with a volatile and passionate nature. The primary role of stereotypes was to create a positive image of Slovaks, including through confrontation with the image of "others."

Slovak autostereotypes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century are a product of specific historical events and ethnic, political, cultural, and social relations in Hungary. Stereotypical

57 LA-SNK Martin, sign. C 860, fond Starý fond – C – Náučné a iné práce. Spoločnosti, Národná povaha Slovákov, s. 3-4.

58 LEHOTSKÁ, Miloslava. Opis Liptova. In *Almanach Nitra I.*, Bratislava: [b. v.], 1847, s. 36.

59 KISS, Michal. Dokola. Črta z cesty. In *Obzor*, roč. 11, 1899, č. 8, s. 10.

60 KOLLÁR, Ján. Dobré vlastnosti národu Slowanského. In Kollár, Ján. *Nedělnj, swátečné i přjležitostné Kázně a Řeči*. Pešt: Trantner-Karoly, 1831, s. 497-525.

ideas about Slovaks played a specific role in the ideology of the Slovak national movement and at the same time constructed and strengthened the national consciousness of Slovaks.

In the context of the formation of a modern nation, stereotypes lead to national imagination, teach us to reduce the complexity of reality and simplify our evaluative view of society and our place in it. At the same time, they facilitate the acceptance of a new identity – identification with the nation.<sup>61</sup> Individual stereotypical ideas fulfilled various functions. All of them created a positive image of Slovaks, making them attractive, acceptable, and competitive in relation to other national projects.

Through autostereotypes, an ideal image of the nation was created and national identity was formed. If the national elites wanted to “awaken” the nation (shape national identity) in the broader strata, to use the term of the time, they had to offer the recipients an image of the nation that was attractive and with which broad strata could identify.

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61 HROCH, Miroslav. *Národy nejsou dílem náhody*. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství, 2009, s. 241.