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Folktales about The Tatras in children's literature

ABSTRACT. In my contribution I will discuss the folktales about the Tatras and their reference in children's literature. I will focus mainly on the stories that appear in the textbook of Slovak literature for the 5th year of elementary schools. Specifically, the tale of Tatranská Kikimora, but also others are discussed. Through this and other individual stories, pupils can learn and get to know more about the environment in which they live.

KEYWORDS: Children's Literature, Folktale, Folk Literature, The Tatras, Kikimor

Folkloristic and literary-scientific research emphasizes that folk literature have very much influenced the development of artistic literature. Verbal art in the earliest period was evolving in connection with the work process and the magical acts and rites that should help the man in the struggle with the natural elements. During this period, the foundations of family and calendar and ceremonial folklore were built. They were mostly dominated by the songs usually associated with e.g. dancing, wedding customs, funeral speeches, etc. From other parts of folklore, there were riddles, adages, weather proverbs, fables and magic fairy tales. Verbal art was mainly a literary manifestation of simple people.

Demonology can be described as a typical folk religion which has been preserved in oral tradition almost until the present time. Manicism is associated with a cult of ancestors. Animism rests on the concepts of a lively or animated nature and a realm of spirits which are based in the nature and have an influence on a daily life of ordinary people. In case of Slovans because of their relatively weak development of official mythology, demonology is basically the main area of the original religious imaginations. Demological concepts have settled through time into oral tradition in various forms such as fables, legends, and fairy tales, and were firmly embedded in Slovak folklore, especially in superstitions and customs (Pius, 2012, p. 42).

When dealing with folklore, in a broader context it can be discussed as a literary folklore, as stated by Peter Liba:

Literary folklore is a constructional process of a literary work in which we aesthetically apply poetological principles, rules, stylistically-compositional shapes and genre patterns of creation and reception of verbal folklore as a folk art in its various developmental stages, even in present ones (Liba, 1991, p. 45).

Miroslav Pius adds:

After leaving (Urheimat—old homeland), the Slavic tribes have arrived to the neighborhood of other ethnicities. These ethnic groups had to necessarily influence their myths, stories, fables, and fairy tales. Before Slavic tribes disintegrated, they formed their basic worldview which they later presented in verbal art—i.e. also in fairy tales (Pius, 2012, p. 207).

From the historical aspect, in the period of Middle Aged literature, the magic and ceremonial elements were gradually disappearing and societal, family and historical themes became more prominent. Also the Christian thinking was being deepened. In a conceptual and artistic differentiation, a varied range of verbal genres was formed. The core of the verbal art was formed by a calendar-based ceremonial poetry, in which there was a dominant position of the ceremonial and love songs, jokes, puzzles, proverbs, riddles, adages, proverbs and weather sayings. An important role was played mainly by family ceremonial poetry with the predominant genres of wedding and lament songs and burial texts. In the Middle Ages, through a historical context, there is an emergence of military, recruiting, and historical songs and songs with outlaw and bandit themes, as well as the texts relating to specific historical events. The accompanying feature of this literary production were social themes, in which a poor man was generally rewarded and a rich man was usually punished. Epic and balladic works were dominated by anti-Turkish struggle, recruiting and military songs. In addition, animal and legend narratives, local stories, and magic fairy tales had been developed. At the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, there was a rise in the development of war-related themes and the theme of resistance against Vienna. There is also unfolding of more realistic stories in which the main hero is a simple person.

According to a significant scholar of the older Slovak literature Ján Mišianik, out of the prosaic genres the following ones were cultivated (Mišianik, 1958, p. 284):

- 1) magical fairytales that later shaped their appearance by specific features such as the battle of the hero with the dragon (Lomidrevo and Valibuk), socially focused themes (e.g. Popoluška, *O dvanástich mesiačikoch*), merging the real and miraculous world, living and unliving nature (e.g. Zakliata hora, Radúz and Mahuliena), the help of fairy-tale characters to the heroes (e.g. *Zlatá podkova*, *Zlaté pero*, *Zlatý vlas*) and the victory of good over evil (e.g. *Sol' nad zlato*);
- 2) realistic, adventurous fairy-tales that took inspirations from everyday life and their hero was a simple man;
- 3) humorous and satirical fairy-tales which fully developed only in the next period;
- 4) folk drama, weather sayings, proverbs, and adages.

For a Slovak folklore—a family is of the highest importance. It takes care not only of the livelihood and housing, but also of the spiritual development of young people. It does this in the form of a tale that teaches and educates children. Tales also preserve spiritual wealth. In the second half of the 17th century and particularly in the 18th century, lyrical songs were developed more intensely, mainly love, military, shepherds and humorous songs. Furthermore basic ballad features and basis for basis for children's folklore, recitations, number songs, and fun games were created. This creation also reflects social tension, especially in socially-tuned songs.

According to literary researchers, verbal art has the following features:

1. It reflects social and cultural relations of the environment—it is the expression of “folk ideology”.
2. Selection and improvisation dominate in the individual approach to realization of verbal art, while selection is the result of the application of folklore phenomena in a particular situation.
3. Improvisation is the carrier of innovative tendencies in the interpretative process, especially in folk narratives.

From the basic types of the verbal folklore (lyrics, epics, drama), the most frequent epic works include the stories of King Mateus Corvinus, who successfully fought against the Turks, and also those about Juraj Jánošík, who represents the courage, bravery and wisdom of a simple man. Jánošík theme is also associated with the folktales of the High Tatras, which mention three thieves—besides Jánošík it is Michal Vdovec and Karol Poroňský. The poetry based on the theme of thieves has inspired many literary works—as Andrej Melicherčík said:

its basic form of celebrating the mountain men, admiring of their fighting courage and valor, coupled with the dreamed desire for liberty and freedom, is developing as the predominant and characteristic feature of the Jánošík tradition in our literature during this period (1955, p. 19).

Folktales have many common features with legends and myths, since supernatural or spiritual beings are often involved in the plot. Stories are related to the specific historical events or characters. If the plot and the characters are invented, the story is localized to a certain place, within a certain time. Historical folktales and ballads particularly depict the period of Turkish incursions into the Slovak country. In addition, local folktales emerge, and include almost all the stories about the Tatras that tell us how various natural formations—hills, ponds, waterfalls, gorges, etc. have been created. Such stories are: *Prečo je Kriváň krivý*, *Studenovodské vodopády*, *Mních*, *Skok* and others. In addition, development of adventurous, satirical, and humorous folktales, similar to fairy tales is evident. In the folktales, folklore is the main motivational basis, with which the folkloric plotlines, poetics and language are much related. The author transmits the whole way of life into his work, which is also reflected in fine arts, music, theatre, dance... etc.

According to Viliam Marčok (1978, p. 78), folktales are divided into:

1. Eponymous, etiological folktales explaining the origin and meaning of cultural and historical phenomena (cities, castles, coats of arms, churches, etc.).
2. Heroic folktales about the actions of historically significant personalities (about Jánošík, King Matej, Bátorý, bandits, etc.).
3. Chronical folktales talking about the events that have affected the fate of a wider collective (wars, uprisings, natural disasters, epidemics, etc.).
4. A socio-utopian folktales discussing a better future of people and their paths towards this future (about underground knights, Jánošík treasures, the emergence of a new Jánošík, etc.).

In the historical process of their mutual coexistence, the folk art and artistic literature have been constantly converging. In the older period, a lot of church themes are becoming more and more included in the calendar-ceremonial poetry. Slovak folklore (folk art) has a specific relation to literature. They have been influencing each other since the old times. Records and editing of folk art usually formed the basic degree /material basis for literary and artistic creation. National folklore is

often associated with music, gestures and other expressions. As Peter Glocko (1991, p. 54) says:

Editing of fairy tales is necessary, we have no doubts about that. More precisely: edits might be called "inserts", that is, what I have already said—the writer's entering into a group of narrators. Today's writer should give his talent to the services of a fairy tale, without shyness, without fear, because the fairy tale has nurtured him. The authors who were not nurtured by it, can be spotted easily—their language lacks something; they lack emotion, they have a fear of simple narratives, they are somehow incomplete, they are cold [...].

Folk poetry belongs to the most widespread kinds of verbal folklore. This is also confirmed by the fact that, since the end of the 18th century, renowned Slovak writers and educators have turned their attention towards folk art as an inexhaustible source of creative stimuli. In the period of the Slovak National Revival, Pavol Jozef Šafárik with Ján Blahoslav and other collaborators issued a collection called *Songs of the worldly people of Slovakia in Uhřích 1, 2* (Pest, 1823, 1827); after them Ján Kollár published a monumental collection of *National songs* (Budín, 1834–1835). In the following, richly developed and so called *Štúrperiod*, the folk song became the basic phenomenon of poetry. Several educators paid special attention to folk art, traditions and folklore as a whole. Jan Francisci Rimavsky published *The Slovak legends* (Levoča, 1845), Pavol Dobšinský and Augustín Horislav Škultéty issued equally entitled *Slovak legends* (Rožňava, 1858, Banská Štiavnica, 1859–1861). Folk art played an inspirational role in the production of significant so-called *Štúr poets* (such as Samo Chalupka, Ján Botto, Janko Kráľ, Ján Kalinčiak, Ľudovít Štúr and others) as well as in the literature production of the next/following generations. They were *Štúr followers* who had been looking for the image of the nation and its history and culture in the legends.

Legends show us the power of a certain motif that had lived through centuries in the nation. Every nation has its heroes, brave monarchs, or warriors who are against iniquity and vanity. Such narratives always helped people to survive spiritually and to be renewed again in difficult moments [...] (Čupka, 2018, p. 9).

Folk literature and in particular legends were also transferred to children's literature and thus influenced its form. According to Benedi-

ková (1991) we can classify literature for children from different points of view, e.g. according to the age of an addressee, or the literary types and genres or by typological criteria. A typological classification is that one which takes into account a type of a book publication, a ratio of the text and images, a graphic layout, a ratio of paper and other book components, a format of the book, etc.

Benediková (1991, in Vitězová, 2016) distinguishes these basic book types:

- 1) visual (genres with a focus on visual and verbal communication);
- 2) visual-textual (genre with a focus on visual, verbal and literary communication);
- 3) textual-visual (genres with a focus on literary, verbal and visual communication).

We consider the literary genres of the first and second categories to be the priority in the child's pre-reader stage of development. In addition to these, there are optional genres, included in the third category. In relation to the addressee they have to fulfill special functions aimed at forming the literary-reading cultivation of a small child. To these so-called the textual-visual genres we assign all intentional texts and genres for pre-reader age; lyrical, epic and dramatic genres; genres of folk art and modern literature; fairy tales, fables and legends; fiction for young children; dialogised forms of games, etc. A separately taken type is a so called synthesizing publication. Together with the text and illustrations in these publications, there are included music materials, sound recordings, educational and artistic sound media, etc. (Vitězová, 2016, p. 25–26).

The storytellers were the people who had a certain gift—good memory and great narrative skills. And people liked listening to them. [...] Narration of stories, either from real-life or from the world of fantasy, had a great value. Stories taught children virtues and moral laws (good always win over evil). Narrating for adults made winters more pleasant. During the time when there was less work on the farms, people grouped together, often just to listen to the narrator. Folk storytelling helped people to survive bad times, modelled their universal moral and ethical values, and taught them to recognize good from evil. In the folk storytelling, there is strongly rooted a fantastical beauty of the ideas, life experience, disappointments and pleasures of the people who had lived centuries before us. We can perceive it and pass it on (Čupka, 2018, p. 1).

As regards children's literature, many legends are included in literature textbooks. They appear mainly in children's books for those aged

between 6–15, representing a younger and older reading age. Legends can be either folk or artificial ones. They belong to epic genres and are linked to specific historical events or characters. This fact differs them from fairy tales. In spite of the real basis of the story, legends contain many fictional elements; besides real characters there are also invented and supernatural ones. Also the story itself is the creation of fantasy. Its dramatic tune is similar to the fairy tale but it more often ends tragically, i.e. by the death of the main hero (Hlebová, 2006, p. 23).

Based on the poetics of the folk legend a new artificial legend has arisen. Its name was originally of much wider scope: referred also to folk fairy tales (*J. Dobšínský—Slovenské prstonárodné povesti*), historical novels of the “Štúr period” (*J. Kalinčiak—Reštavrácia*), as well as contemporary prose (*M. Kukučín—Dom v stráni*). At present, we prefer a narrower meaning of this genre. It is a story that has a historical background and is bound to a specific place and/or to a specific person. These stories are divided into local (referring to the names of places, hills, rivers, and castles), historical (Great Moravian period, battles with Turks, outlaw stories), and heraldic ones (about coat of arms) (*Žánre detskej literatúry*, 2016).

Legends representing epic narration can be prosaic also in verses. They have much to do with fables and myths and are divided into two basic groups:

1. Local legends—linked to a certain location. They include:
 - etymological legends (explain the origins of cities, names of rivers, hills, and rocks);
 - etiological legends (touching the natural peculiarities of the region, the emergence of certain phenomena, particularities of the region); and
 - legends about castles and mansions (prefer social motifs).
2. Historical legends—describe important events in the national history (Hlebová, 2006, p. 23).

According to the ethnologist and historian Nádaska, regional legends are local—they are linked to a specific location. Historical legends have a wider reach, describing major events and personalities (Čupka, 2018).

Legends are characterized by genre hybridization. There is a crossing of a fairy tale and a legend or they are incompletely processed. At that period, one of the most fruitful authors of this genre, Anton Marec (1953), published his works. He was active especially in the 1990s when

he wrote two freely related cycles of Tatra legends *Zlato pod Kriváňom* (1991) and *Zakliaty hrad v Tatrách* (1993). In these cycles he retained the traditional view of the legend, giving us regional topography of Tatra. Other historical prose is quite poor in the 90s; it is represented only by the standard works of Nora Baráthová, by her biographical novel about Hviezdoslaven titled *Študent* (1991), prosaic works balancing on the frontier of the historical story and a legend: *Hviezdy nad Tatrami* (1995) (Stanislavová, 2018).

According to J. Kołbuszewski (1999, p. 13):

the symbolism of Tatra has become one of the basic elements of Slovak literature and culture, which has come back over and over (in modifications) in many poets' works and entered a widely understood cultural life.

The first book of legends that tells stories about the Tatra is the work of Alfred Grosz titled *Povesti spod Tatier*. Sea eyes, tarns, green valleys and rocks of different shapes make a call for our creative fantasy. Hard-working people, whose world was only mountains and work, cannot be judged for wanting their everyday hardships to be shaken by the world of magic beings. One of the themes of the book is the one devoted to fantastic beings. Alfred Grosz (1885–1973) offers us stories from the mountains where the main heroes were devils, witches, fairies, the Snake king, powerful Vut and other beings who have chosen the Slovak mountains for their home. Many places in the Tatra are bound to legends—some of them are real events enriched by the imagination of folk people, others are fictional stories.

Alfred Grosz has also enriched his book by the detailed landmarks, citations from the books of travellers, or those who published in the chronicles and magazines before him. Because of its authenticity, it does not miss out the names of the ones who remembered and told him all the stories. He also mentions the real characters who tried to explore Tatra—gold-diggers, enthusiastic travellers, mountaineers, or those who had magically become rich in a short time—perhaps because they found treasure. The author worked as a professor of German and Slovak grammar school in Kežmarok and Grammar school in Spišská Nová Ves and today the gorge and pillar in the wall of the Slavkovský shield are named after him (Justová, 2018, p. 5).

Another author who deals with the Tatra says:

The High Tatra. Our only magnates, a unique jewel in the heart of the European continent. Symbol of Slovakia. High Tatra. At first sight, the dead

granite mountains of inaccessible shields, and yet! They and the people living in them have something in common—history (Marec, 2002, p. 8).

In the Slovak literature curriculum for the 5th form of elementary schools, there is a legend or rather a fable about Tatran Kikimore. It explains people's ideas about how some mountains and rivers have been created in Slovakia (mountain ranges: Ďumbier, Kriváň, Mních, Satan, Lomničan). The central character is the most beautiful daughter of Tatran called Hoľa. Witch Kikimora's son fell in love with Hoľa. However, she did not reciprocate his love, and so the witch transformed the sons and daughters of Tatran into mountains and rivers. She was assisted by the rock, underground, and mountain ghosts and they caused earthquake by this acts. The text of this legend is as follows: "In the region, where the high Tatra shields are situated, a long time ago there was a large plain. And on this plane, the family of giants was living happily. Father was called Tatran and had many sons and beautiful daughters. The oldest of them was Kriváň, followed by Gerlach, Ďumbier, Chabanec... etc. Well, and of all daughters, Hoľa was the prettiest one. She was such a beautiful girl that suitors from the whole world came to ask for her hand and tried to overcome one another in the race to become her husband. One day the son of the witch Kikimora came in between the giants. He had only one eye, even squinting on it, he had hair everywhere and smelled really badly. Well, and such a monster asked for the hand of a beautiful Hoľa! Her brothers, would not give her to him, of course. That's why they beat him up and drove him away back to his mother. But when the evil Kikimora learned how her son had been treated, she was terribly angered and took into her head that the giant family of Tatras must have their revenge! Kikimora immediately summoned all her helpers—goblins, forest spirits, and she also received a help from her most loyal friends: Satan—the ruler of the fire and North—the ruler of the wind. Kikimora pulled dark clouds over the sky and threw huge rocks into giants. Some of them said they should retreat. Almost no one was able to escape. Only a beautiful Hoľa did it, as the strong Ďumbier took her away on his back. Then the angry Kikimora uttered a curse —the entire family of giants was turned into stone. And so, in what position they were when the curse has reached them, in this pose they are leaning over the plain to this day. Some of them were higher and some of them were lower, and so they got their names—High and Low Tatras (Marec, 2002, p. 12).

This legend teaches children not only about rock formations but also leads them to realize what evil conduct means and what is meant by mutual compassion, modesty and hard work. The whole story carries a positive value system that children can adopt. At the same time it teaches them to love their native land through its natural beauties, which they can discover and admire not only with teachers but also with their parents. They can go to Tatras to see where Hoľa, Ďumbier, and many other giants are located.

Another legend with similarly artificially created characters and situations is the legend entitled *Ako dostali Tatry svoje meno (How the Tatras got their name)*. There are also the characters that represent good and those who present evil—the so-called black and white vision of the world.

In the place where the Tatras are today, according to the legend, once upon a time there was only a plain. The myth speaks about the attack of wild Tatars. On the plains between today's Slovakia and Poland, their troops allegedly met with our ancestors. They were losing the battle with experienced Tatar warriors, so men decided to get advice from a mysterious old man. He advised them not to let surrender. A storm came in at night and a mysterious comet emerged, causing the entire Tatar army to turn into rocks by the next morning. In the place where formerly the military camp was located there were only mighty mountains. The legend says that the hills were called Tatars just after the fallen troops, and later the name was shortened to the Tatras (Marec, 1993, p. 11).

As this legend proves, these really are just invented stories. The truth is somewhere else. This is how the legend is interpreted by Anton Marec, who adds an explanation to every legend in his work. As regards this story:

The historians confirm the fact that the Tatars invaded Slovakia in the 13th century but they never reached Tatras. They depopulated and occupied only the southern parts of Slovakia. But when the threat of further penetration arised, the inhabitants of northern Slovakia began searching for shelters in the mountains [...] They were called the Tatras long before Tatars appeared in the history of our country. In the 1086 charter, the mountains are called Trytri, in other writings they are referred to as Tyrtur or Turtur. The name Tatras appears for the first time in the donation letter of Krakow Prince Boleslav from 1255. One thing is certain: The name of our mountains is rooted in the Old Slavonic word trtri. Our ancestors used this term to name a steep rock [...] (Marec, 1993, p. 13).

For children and children's literature, however, such legends are more acceptable, and children are better able to imagine what was happening in the past. It is an easier way for them how to understand historical facts. However, if these facts are presented by an epic style, they are more accessible for children and children can also identify themselves with some of the heroes of the story, with brave women, or men who fight for their nation and their love and they are rewarded for their goodness and help to others. Children get themselves easier into a story in which they can use their fantasy unlike the story in which everything is clear.

The standard educational text in the intentions of children's literature is traditionally represented by a folk tale. In particular, historical stories are the first binders of child readers with the national past. In these tales a child finds a bridge which connects the world of literature and the history. From the viewpoint of school literary education, the educational value of folk tales as well as their cognitive and aesthetic features are beneficial. Current author's take on folk tales oscillates between mimicking of certain patterns, inspiration from folk tales basics, basically only by changing the fate of the characters or the so called historical core in the author's text. In the Slovak literary space there is an editor Jozef Melicher, who approached the story with respect and folklore knowledge and we consider him to be an accurate editor of folklore extensions. One of the stories from his book *From Zobor to Sitno* (Bratislava, DONY 1998) ends with these words: "It may not be quite true, but it is definitely not untrue". He through these words brings out the most accurate meaning and the content of the term folk tale, how to read the story and what to look for while reading it (Vítězová, 2016, p. 26).

As Vítězová says,

it is interesting that the classic repertoire of today's child readers still consist mostly of classical fairy tales, and the literature that sticks with reality does not really speak to them as much. By a gradual psychological development the child begins to differ, what is the reality and what is the fiction in the literature. He/she begins to recognize what really can happen and what is nonsense. He/she does not take a fairy-tale fantasy literary, but subconsciously believes in it in order to give himself/herself a fun ride. This is not just about fairy tales, but also about other genres of children's literature, such as fables, folk tales, animal stories, etc. (Vítězová, 2016, p. 8).

Vítězová refers to Bohuslav Beneš:

The intermediate step between fairy-tales, especially fantastic ones, and the folk tales are superstitious short stories. They include mostly short narra-

tions about experiences with supernatural beings. Different types of phenomena and their effects are often set in historical monuments and in mysterious or unusual places in nature under certain magical circumstances or special occasions. Superstitious short stories are also referred to as demonic folk tales and are part of folk tale research (Vitezová, 1997, p. 65).

The most widespread fabled beings in the Tatras tales are the fairies and the water-sprites to whom many folk tales are devoted. One of the stories is about a girl who fell asleep on the shore of Štrbské pleso (tarn). As she slept, the handsome ruler of the deep waters rose from the tarn. He was so fond of the girl that he had snapped her and disappeared with her under the surface. When she woke up, she was so overwhelmed by the wealth of the ruler's palace that she had turned into a fairy and became his wife. According to the legend, she still lives by the Skok waterfall.

The water-sprites also allegedly lived in tarns and were known of stealing women. Another legend is about a Green tarn water-sprite who was about to fight for the wife of the other water-sprite from the Jamske tarn. Such fights had their exact rules: if during the fight the white foam came out on the surface, it was a veil of water girl and the suitor could take her away. If the red foam appeared, it was a water-sprites blood. The folk tales even reports that the water-sprited do not longer live in the Tatras today because they exterminated each other (Tatranské mýty a legendy, 2018). The tarns are the adorning of Tatras, and so many stories have arisen specifically about them. Scientists say they were the result of glacier activity.

The people living under the Tatras had their own explanation, and therefore they were calling them sea eyes atleast until recent times. They believed that these water areas did not appear in the Tatras by chance and that the underground corridors were connected with the Baltic Sea. The people from Tatras knew about tarns long before the first scholars arrived in the High Tatras. Treasurers and treasure hunters, animal hunters, herbalists and shepherds—all of them stood on the banks of the tarns and listened to the spur of unsettled waters. At that time, however, people did not suffer from such precision as they suffer today, so tarns did not have their names yet (Marec, 1993, p. 69–71).

Folk tales were always interesting for children, and in a reasonable way they showed them how different natural phenomena arose, but also what fairy-tale beings could have lived around them, though they were

predominantly the expression of the fantasy of ordinary people. They invented the stories mainly because they could not explain various natural phenomena.

When we talk about folk tales and legends as opposed to fairy tales, these two kinds of oral narratives are distinguished by the fact that we do not believe in the fairytale a priori, we will immediately think-ah, this is invented. As regards the folk tales, we say—well, there may be a piece of truth in it. For example, we are listening to the story—our “grandpa” told me that there was once a well, but it was backfilled together with a treasure. And why would not that be true when our “grandpa” said it? So, unlike fairy tales, the folk tales are believed to be true more by the one who speaks and the one who listens to it. And indeed, so many stories are linked to real events and specific, historically documented characters (Kiliánová, 2016, p. 4).

Children are gradually withdrawing from the literature for children and youth and begin to realize what is fantastic and what is real in these works. Subconsciously, they are beginning to incline towards realism in literature. This is also the stance of the authors who are beginning to deal with literature for youth or other genres. Feldek claims:

My sail away from the beautiful island of children literature I often justify by the private paradox which I have built for the need of my friends and myself: I did it for the children. The ship on which I was sailing away (I think it was in 1976) had the proud name: *Báseň na obranu detí* (= the Poem on how to defend children). There are simply things that—for the sake of children, and for the sake of their physical and mental health—we adults have to make right among one another. I still expect that it will be already figured out, that it will be so normal and natural, that I will no longer be needed (Ďurinová, 1991, p. 35).

In the past, legends influenced the whole human life, the view of people of the world and the countryside around them. Based on legends, they shaped their own view of the entire life. Nowadays, legends are perceived by children as fantastic fairy tales which they encounter during their learning process at school. Thanks to them, teachers are able to raise children's interest in nature, in their native region and in everything that surrounds them. They use legends to bring people's lives in the past closer to children. Thus the legends give them the opportunity to link the past with the present and show the children the beauties of Slovakia.

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