The Lowland Chronotope: Narrative Strategies of Identity and Space in the Didactic Poetry of Rehor Uram-Podtatranský

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Abstract:
This paper explores the functional and aesthetic duality of Slovak minority literature in Romania through a critical analysis of Rehor Uram-Podtatranský's (1846–1924) poetry collection Zlaté perličky pre dobré detičky (Golden Pearls for Good Children, Nadlak, 1926). While contemporary Slovak literary criticism (Sliacky, Gbúr, Eliáš) often categorizes Podtatranský's work as anachronistic and rigidly rooted in 19th-century moralistic-didactic traditions, this examination provides a nuanced recontextualization of his poetry within the Lowland chronotope. It examines the paradox between the text's aesthetic archaism and its vital socio-cultural necessity for a scattered minority facing institutional and linguistic isolation after 1918, introducing a key distinction between the text's aesthetic and pragmatic narrative functions. Through textual analysis, the paper investigates specific narrative strategies – such as natural ontogenesis, zoomorphic allegories, the intrusive didactic voice, and the structural symbiosis of home, church, and school – used to instill ethical codes and counter forced denationalization. Through a textual analysis of verses ranging from Hlasy dietok (Voices of Children) to the industrial narrative of Vozík a železnica (Cart and Railway), the research illustrates the functional shift of Podtatranský's work. His moral maxims and philosophical questions operated not merely as obsolete mentoring warnings, but as active defensive pedagogical tools and vital vectors of wisdom. Ultimately, by connecting the historical publishing milestone of 1926 with contemporary pedagogical receptions – exemplified by the 2020 anthology released by the Ivan Krasko Publishing House in Nadlak – the analysis demonstrates how regional contexts shift the reception of an outdated literary corpus into a permanent, century-long mechanism for preserving minority identity, national self-confidence, and linguistic continuity between the Highland and Lowland spaces in 2026.

Keywords:
Lowland Slovak Literature, Rehor Uram-Podtatranský, Identity, Narrative Strategies, Lowland Chronotope, Didactic Poetry.