



**FAKULTA  
HUMANITNÍCH STUDIÍ**  
Univerzita Karlova

Supervisor review

# Getting Back to Europe: An Analysis of a Possible Self-Perceived Inadequacy of Czechs Towards the West

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Mr. Ertin submits for defense an original thesis, which is thematically based on the postcolonial perspective and the theory of Orientalism of Edward Said. Using this theory he tries to explain the specifically Czech inferiority complex in relation to the West.

The motivation for writing this thesis was the graduate's observations during his English teaching. He was surprised by the fact that despite the high level of civilization of Czech society, Czechs have an inferiority complex and look up to the West.

The present work represents the third revised version. The previous versions were designed to have a theoretical and an empirical part. I was an opponent of the first version, which was rejected due to, among other reasons, superficial analysis and low quality of the data used.

Then I took pity on the student and took over his guidance. The second version was better, but the student decided to resign from the defense and radically revise the paper.

Compared to the previous versions, the thesis was conceived in a different way.

- 1) The author resigned from the analysis of quantitative data.
- 2) The author decided to lay emphasis on the ideological sources of the ideas of Western hegemony. Two thirds of the thesis is devoted to this and the last third is devoted to the application of this theory to the Czech and Central European case.

The author demonstrates a fairly deep knowledge of the intellectual history of the currents of thought behind the idea of the cultural superiority of the West. He also works with primary sources, for

example, I was interested in a number of quotations from various works of Aristotle. On p. 29 he quotes Einhard's Vita Caroli.

The "secondary sources" cited include a number of authors who are among the classics of historiography and sociological theory. Abu-Lughod Janet, Johann Arnason, Arnold Toynbee, Reinhard Bendix, and of course Edward Said, from whom the author draws heavily.

I was particularly pleased with the quotation from the Austrian historian Walter Pohl, one of the greatest experts on early medieval Central European historiography.

Particularly noteworthy are the author's observations, which attempt to incorporate elements of structuralism and psychoanalysis (the concept of otherness) into the interpretations.

Overall, I rate the section on the development of ideas of Western superiority as very successful and theoretically sophisticated.

I am somewhat more skeptical of the author's attempts to explain the phenomena of the typically Czech inferiority complex using these "postcolonial" approaches. Nevertheless, I try to respect the academic freedom and the different ideological background of the student. Moreover, I have already expressed my objections to this approach in my review of the previous version of the thesis. I would therefore leave the assessment of the plausibility of this approach to my opponent and the committee. However, I must point out that, compared to previous attempts, the student has 1) incorporated new literature, 2) included a more Central European context, and 3) significantly strengthened his knowledge of Czech realities compared to previous versions.

I therefore recommend the thesis for defence and rate it with a very good grade.

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