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Bachelor's Thesis

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**In what ways do men and women authors use ethnological
components in their depictions of women in their writing
from the 19th-century Czech National Revival?**

Bachelor's Thesis

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Year of the defence: 2024

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- 1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.**
- 2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.**
- 3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.**

In Prague on 31.07.2024

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References

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Abstract

The thesis examines the ways in which male and female authors utilized ethnological components in their depictions of women during the 19th-century Czech National Revival. Focusing on the prominent figures Karel Jaromír Erben, Božena Němcová, Karel Hynek Mácha, and Eliška Krásnohorská, the study aims to explore how these authors incorporated cultural practices, social roles, beliefs and values, and traditional narratives into their works. By analyzing the texts *Kytice*, *Babička*, *Máj*, and *Svéhlavička*, the thesis aims to reveal the fascinating interplay between gender, culture, and identity. The research predominantly highlights ethnological components like folklore, domestic rituals, and societal expectations, and what these depictions suggest about the 19th-century perceptions of women in Czech society. Finally, through a comparative analysis of male and female choices of ethnological components in depicting women, the thesis provides a nuanced understanding of the cultural dynamics at play during Czech history.

Keywords

Ethnology, gender roles, depiction, Czech National Revival

Abstrakt

Práce zkoumá způsoby, jakými autoři a autorky v období českého národního obrození 19. století využívaly etnologické složky při zobrazování žen. Studie se zaměřuje na významné osobnosti Karla Jaromíra Erbena, Boženu Němcovou, Karla Hynka Máchu a Elišku Krásnohorskou a snaží se prozkoumat, jak tito autoři do svých děl začlenili kulturní praktiky, sociální role, víru a hodnoty, a tradiční narativy. Rozborem textů Kytice, Babička, Máj a Svěhlavička si práce klade za cíl odhalit fascinující souhru mezi genderem, kulturou a identitou. Výzkum se zaměřuje především na etnologické složky, jako je folklór, domácí rituály a společenská očekávání, a na to, co tato zobrazení naznačují o vnímání žen v české společnosti 19. století. A konečně, prostřednictvím komparativní analýzy mužského a ženského výběru etnologických složek při zobrazování žen, práce poskytuje lepší pochopení kulturní dynamiky, která se odehrávala během českých dějin.

Klíčová slova

Etnologie, gender, zobrazení, české národní obrození

Název práce

Etnologické zobrazení žen z pohledu vybraných románů autorů a autorek z období Českého národního obrození 19. století.

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Introduction

The 19th century was predominantly marked by the inauguration or more accurately the resurgence of Czech culture, language, and ultimately national identity, catalyzed by the proliferating sense of nationalism among the Czech population, after an almost successful, complete eradication of the Czech language. Thereafter, this epoch was a key witness to a burgeoning surge of literary arts that sought most importantly to revive and reestablish the Czech language, but to illustrate the nation's social and cultural web palpably. Among many various themes and art movements explored by authors of this era, the depiction of women stands out as a significant element that reflects broader ethnological components.

Ethnology the now commonly understood analytical, interdisciplinary field of cultures, concentrates on the comparative documentation of customs, social structures, beliefs, and traditions. The evolution of the term reflects broader changes in the academic field including most notably the refined understanding of culture as a developing topic of substantial complexity and diversity. With that in mind, by examining how ethnology was utilized during the 19th-century Czech National Revival we can gain a deeper insight into the ways ethnological elements in literature helped shape cultural identity. Furthermore in relation to the topic of gender, exploring how both female and male authors utilized and incorporated ethnological elements into depictions of women will allow for a nuanced comprehension of social hierarchy, cultural norms, and values of the 19th-century Czech society. Within the context of literature, ethnological components refer to the deliberate choice of including cultural elements into literary works to depict life, customs, and traditions to provide a deeper cultural context.

Men and women authors of the time expectedly approached the complex subject of characterizing women differently, most often influenced by their own unique perspectives and the societal expectations placed on gender during that period. While male authors usually depicted women in ways that reinforced traditional gender roles and nationalistic ideals, following the standard conventions of societal expectations, female authors frequently offered more candid and diverse portrayals that challenged or expanded upon these conventions. By examining a selection of famous literary works from this period, this thesis aims to uncover the varying ethnological strategies employed by both male and female writers in their representation of women highlighting the complex combination of gender, culture, and literature during the Czech National Revival.

In contemporary Czechia, The Czech National Revival is seen as a symbolic event of significant importance to the population, with monuments, squares, museums, and many hours of educational material being dedicated to the greatly esteemed minds of the movement. It is, after all, believed to be responsible for not just reviving the language and ‘cultural renaissance’, but for fostering a sense of unity, pride, and resistance, and most probably setting the groundwork for the future pursuit of autonomy among the Czech people. Many authors in the sphere of said topic have questioned the reasons for the revival and for the peculiar refusal of our ancestors to comply and become a part of a generally well-esteemed Empire. Furthermore, as was touched upon previously, the movement became witness to the surge of literary arts that sought to revive the Czech language. However, that seems to downplay the incredibly fascinating nature of the 19th-century landscape as it fell ‘victim’ to more influences than those of the nationalists. The epoch had also seen a gradual increase in literacy for women of the time and simultaneously recognized the rise of women authors. Who had alongside men explored other international literary inclinations recognized today as Romanticism and Biedermeier ultimately further emphasizing the interplay of culture, gender, and that of the literary arts within the revival.

Despite this, however, although great attention and analysis have been given to famous authors and their works of the time, little work has been done to recognize their similarities and differences especially given their roles in society. Having grown up outside of the Czech Republic for most of my life, I only had the opportunity to experience life in Czech around the age of 9 years old. Now having spent the past 2 and a half years reconnecting with my own culture and identity, literature has been of significant help. In other words, I could no longer speculate on the revival nor my ancestors for their refusal to give up simply for the promise of being part of a ‘greater’ nation. Likewise, having grown up in various developing countries in the Middle East and Southern Africa, the direct interplay of culture and gender is a topic of great complexity that I wish to highlight within a topic that I so greatly resonate with.

As stated previously this thesis aims to reveal the contrasting ethnological strategies employed by the male and female authors in their representation or rather depiction of women. More specifically focusing on the question ‘In what ways do men and women authors use ethnological components in their depictions of women in their writing from the 19th century Czech National Revival?’ By focusing on the most esteemed authors of the movement and their most known literary works: Karel Jaromír Erben (*Kytice* 1853), Karel Hynek Mácha (*Máj* 1836),

Božena Němcová (*Babička* 1855), and lastly Eliška Krásnohorská (*Svéhlavička* 1899), I hope to analyze how their choices in regard to representing women differ from each other and how their incorporation of ethnological material influences such. Finally, through the analysis of both primary and secondary sources such as the texts themselves, and scholarly publications, this thesis aims to portray the diverse interplay of gender, culture, and literature during the Czech National Revival. With the ultimate intention to provide an enhanced understanding of the purposeful inclusion of ethnological components, valuable gender perspectives, and historical contextualization, ideally promoting interdisciplinary research whilst encouraging cultural preservation.

The first part of the thesis will set the context for the literature chosen, by briefly illustrating what the 19th-century landscape was like, this means expanding on The Czech National Revival, Romanticism, Biedermeier, and what it actually meant to be a woman in society. Consequently, it will explore the authorial context, more specifically explain why these particular authors were chosen, and expand on the life of each individual author. Only following that will the thesis delve into an individual analysis of each literary text focusing on the ethnological components: cultural and social structures, beliefs and values, material culture, and language, lastly examining them side by side in relation to the context that influenced each author's artistic choices.

1. Historical Context

Understanding the movements taking shape in the Czech lands in the 19th century; The Czech National Revival, Romanticism, and Biedermeier, is crucial for recognizing the author's artistic liberties taken within their literary works. More accurately further comprehension of this period (what it actually meant to be a woman in society) allows understanding of the author's contributions and their connection to the individual influences of the cultural renaissance seen in the ethnological components, gender dynamics, literary devices (techniques and thematics) and political undertones. Providing future insight into the interplay of literature, identity, and culture.

1.1 The Czech National Revival

The Czech National Revival, “Národní Obrození” also sometimes referred to as the awaking or resurrection is attributed to the time period in the 18th and 19th remembered today for its significant public endeavor in the resurgence of Czech culture, language, and ultimately national identity.

The movement goes back to the aftereffects of the battle on the white mountain in the 17th century. The battle marked the first relevant victory for the Habsburgs over the Protestant Union - an alliance that stood against what Parker, N. Geoffrey refers to as “the rise of Roman Catholic states of Ceounter-Reformation Europe”¹ - that dispersed only a few months later the following year. More specifically as Ferdinand II retook possession of power over Bohemia his threatful perception of non-Catholics heightened his intolerance and led to more severe and harsh punishments for any form of rebellion.² Thereafter due to the newfound unrestrained re-Catholicisation, many have fled. Consequentially the Czech lands experienced acute levels of Germanisation as German culture predominated in education, public life, and the administration. By the 18th century, once Bohemia, Moravia, and segments of Silesia were under the rule of the

¹ N. Geoffrey Parker, “Battle of White Mountain,” Encyclopedia Britannica, November 1, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-White-Mountain>.

² Elizabeth Wiskemann et al., “The Counter-Reformation and Protestant Rebellion,” Encyclopedia Britannica, April 19, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Czechoslovak-history/The-Counter-Reformation-and-Protestant-rebellion>.

Austrian Empire,³ the Czech language had been nearly entirely diminished from society, reduced to a trivial dialect among the lower classes (who were also most often illiterate). This coincided with book burnings during which much Czech literature was destroyed. It wasn't until the act of Josef II, which put an end to forced labor and brought lower class members to society that aroused awareness of the almost fully obliterated tongue and catalyzed the Czech National Revival.

As suggested, the revival rested upon the governing body's dismissal of Czech culture and identity, thus its success stemmed from rebuilding national pride. The revivalist's tedious process began through the literary arts. This usually meant translating and creating material with educational potential, as well as documenting and resurfacing Czech traditions. One of the most recognisable achievements of the revivalists however is arguably their effort to showcase the Czech language and culture as one deserving of preservation. In connection to translations, one of the greatest creations of the epoch was Josef Jungman's 120,000-word dictionary, created with the sole intent of demonstrating to society the Czech language was just as versatile and 'rich' as the German language⁴ approaching a stage of the revival during which archaisms were brought back, neologisms and vocabulary of pure Czech origin were created. With that said, almost all artistic liberties undertaken by the great minds of the movement swayed towards positive appraisal of Czech with noticeable references of praise towards the Czech lands and their people, purposefully stirring the population to its distinctive form of nationalist pride.⁵ In other words, the literature of the movement aimed for this shift of perspective and burgeoning sense of pride with the aim to preserve. A strong example could be the now Czech National Anthem, composed in 1834 for a Czech play by Josef Kajetan Tyl.⁶ The song continuously addresses the land's beautiful nature, and names it "paradise on earth." Likewise as suggested earlier, similar efforts went into ethnological work. As the revivalists engaged in extensive work to document and gather Czech folklore, including tales, dances, and songs - all seen as vital depository of national

³ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "Bohemia," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, March 1, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Bohemia>.

⁴ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "Enlightenment, Romanticism, Realism," Britannica, February 21, 2013, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Czech-literature/The-18th-and-19th-centuries#ref91585>.

⁵ Petr Příhoda, Petr Pithart, and Milan Otáhal, *Češi v Dějinách Nové Doby (1848–1939)*, 978th–80th–7656th–0th ed. (1991; repr., Machart, 2021), 24–25.

⁶ Petr Štěpán, "Hymna České Republiky," *Vlast*, January 21, 2013, <https://vlast.cz/hymna-ceske-republiky/>.

character - they aimed to foster national continuity. In other words, during the movement many publications of folk tales, songs, etc. have been released with the intention of reconnecting the people to their cultural roots and ultimately ‘reviving’ their Czech spirit, making these national treasures that were accessible to a broader audience. The most notable figures of these efforts were authorial contributors like Karel Jaromír Erben and Božena Němcová.

1.2 Romanticism

Romance, now a commonly known term associated with the emotion of love, originally - in Latin - referred to the Roman language. The terms had most often been used to describe the Roman medieval knight stories which often had distinctive subtexts of love. Thus subsequently the term's associations with the modern definition of the word began to shift.⁷ The era of romanticism, however, although perfectly adept in exploring themes of romantic love, is not defined by modern understandings.

The intellectual and artistic movement emerged in Western Europe in the second half of the 18th century as a form of rebellion against what Muffet Jones depicts as the “aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment and also a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature”⁸ By short definition the romantic movement - especially with reference to the literary arts- can be summarised as a free imaginative fiction with tendencies toward pantheism and a significant shift to the importance of the character’s individual experiences.

By longer definition, the literary style shifted to delve into the profound inner ardor, in other words, the hopes, dreams, emotions, and the individuals' purpose or place in the world. Similarly, similar changes occur in the setting of literary art. The world is now more open, with the sky seeming interminable and full of possibilities. This was further encouraged and exaggerated in response to the Industrial Revolution. This phenomenon has since been given a name and is by particular enthusiasts referred to as the “five ‘I’s.” Imagination, inspiration,

⁷ Lydia Zeldenrust, “The Mills & Boon of the Middle Ages? Unpicking the Mysteries of Medieval Romances,” HistoryExtra, July 16, 2021, <https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/medieval-romance-literature-works-knights-dragons-damsels-chaucer-mills-boon/>.

⁸ Muffet Jones, “Romanticism,” *Boisestate.pressbooks.pub*, n.d., <https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/arhistory/chapter/romanticism/>.

idealism, and individuality.⁹ Although the movement has manifested in Czech lands similarly and exhibits similar if not identical features of the pre-defined Romanticism, it is considered underdeveloped. Czech romantic literature of the time explores the themes of the movement mostly by their connection to nature and the space surrounding them, individuality often unanimous with emotional intensity, aesthetics of melancholy, and folkloric elements.¹⁰ One of the more uniquely Czech Romanticism features may be attributed to the origins of literary protagonists. That is, the protagonists usually come from the bourgeoisie class. Furthermore, keeping in mind the stress on emotions, the protagonist's world merges with that of the author's, creating a surreal, or rather, unique form of author surrogate. One if not the most notable Czech authors influenced by the wave of Romanticism is Karel Hynek Mácha.

1.3 Biedermeier

The Biedermeier period, although shortlived, was a cultural epoch taking place most notably in German-speaking Central Europe, hence including the Czech lands. The approximate timelines spanning from 1815 to 1848, the Biedermeier period should be understood as a mood summarising a particular collection of trends.¹¹ The term had originally referred to a satirical character from the middle class¹² but was later applied to a broader cultural movement. The period was preceded by the Napoleonic Wars (ended 1815) and the Congress of Vienna (ended 1815) which arguably catalyzed the character of the Biedermeier period; focusing on domestic life, political conservatism, social stability, and the bourgeoisie class.

The key characteristic of the literature with Biedermeier influence, was the strong focus on domestic life, in other words, themes that were based on the family and homemaking. The literary texts were supposed to encourage good morals, which at the time meant attributes such

⁹ Sydney Zirbel, "The Five I's of Romanticism," prezi.com, March 3, 2014, https://prezi.com/tkto_hffzyxu/the-five-is-of-romanticism/#:~:text=Romanticism%20Five%20I..

¹⁰ Jan Lehár et al., *Česká Literatura Od Počátků K Dnešku*, vol. 251000706269 (1998; repr., Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2020), 197–99.

¹¹ Ilsa Barea, *Vienna: Legend and Reality* (1966; repr., Faber & Faber, 2012), https://www.google.cz/books/edition/Vienna/MQiV8HLgV_4C?hl=en&gbpv=0.

¹² Ian Chilvers, *The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists*, 4th ed. (1990; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), https://www.google.cz/books/edition/The_Oxford_Dictionary_of_Art_and_Artists/HFExDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover.

as modesty, religious devotion, and more while remaining sentimental and non-oppressive.¹³ Despite there being few connections to Romanticism such as the movements' shared appreciation of nature (a yearning for the idealized refuge of it) and turn toward intense emotional evocation in connection to hopes and aspirations, their world-building is almost entirely different. Biedermeier providing detailed descriptions of the everyday, mundane life of the bourgeoisie usually refrains from opening their world. There is a clear avoidance of political themes and a desire for order. To compare it to previous descriptions of romanticism, the sky under the Biedermeier influence is not interminable and full of possibilities, but rather limited and closed ("home"). The movement's emphasis on previously discussed values, mirrored the values of society essentially aiding in the modern understanding of post-Napoleonic Central Europe. Some of the significant followers of the said period are Josef Kajetán Tyl, Jan Neruda, Karel Jaromír Erben, and Božena Němcová.

Compared to the movement of Romanticism, the Biedermeier movement had better reception among the population. This was most likely influenced by the broader socio-political context during that time period. More accurately, readers of the time, as well as authors writing under Biedermeier influence, interpreted Romantic works through the lens of nationalistic aspirations, and thus failed to visualize the potential of the global wave of Romantic ideals.

1.4 Women in the 19th-century

Spanning roughly from the late 18th century to the mid-19th century, the Czech National Revival, as was established earlier, had profound influence over the resurgence of the collective Czech national identity. However, during the cultural and political awakening, significant impacts were also felt by the women's communities.

During the revival, women were most prevalently seen and/or defined by domestic duties. Those were during the time limited to the general encompassed term of homemakers. In more detail that suggests jobs like child and elderly care, child rearing, cleaning, and cooking. In rural areas, their duties prevailed but were more diversified as they also participated in agricultural work alongside their male counterparts. Women were key to a successful subsistence farming

¹³ Svetlana Nikolajevna Averkina and Galina Ivanovna Rodina, "Biedermeier Man (Adalbert Stifter on Happiness)," ed. G. Sorokoumova and T. Grob, *SHS Web of Conferences* 122 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202112205004>.

economy. Despite the workload, however, their duties remained taken for granted as it was an expectation placed upon women recognized throughout society. This pattern followed through women's employment too. Women couldn't always afford a life at home, and work opportunities were limited and scarcely well compensated compared to men. Available work possibilities included agriculture labor, factory work, maid, and home-oriented small businesses selling crafts that were usually an extension of their domestic duties anyway (embroidery). Predictably a woman's marital status was also deemed important. Women were expected to marry young and were defined by their status and their relation to men. In other words, subsumed under either their husband or father (if unmarried). This also meant most marriages were restrictively understood for their economic and social value rather than that of love, hence most marriages were a product of arrangement.

In terms of education, however, the topic of women took an interesting turn. The Hussite Wars dating back to the first half of the 15 century, in which women took place in battle, were characterized by “emphasis on equality and the demand that the Bible should be available in the language of the people. Education was allowed for men and women.”¹⁴ It was only after the defeat of the Hussites that women were relegated and returned back inside their homes. To once again have their value derived from their domestic abilities. That is not to say education remained unavailable, basic education remained available to girls throughout. It was however limited. This changed during the awakening as the revivalists aimed to include women in the educational push and consequentially founded future educational advancements.¹⁵ With increased awareness and understanding of literacy as a significant tool for the resurrection, revivalists recognized the need to involve women, ultimately nurturing a literate and culturally aware society. It was only with the rise of feminism in the second half of the 19th-century that schooling for women started to evolve. With many schools for women being based upon teachings on how to be a better woman (focusing on the culinary arts, embroidering, sewing and so on).

This unanimously gave rise to women intellectual figures of the time. Women often

¹⁴ Jaime Johnston, “A History of Czech Feminism,” Czech Center Museum Houston, August 14, 2023, <https://www.czechcenter.org/blog/2023/5/30/a-history-of-czech-feminism>.

¹⁵ Blanka Knotkova-Capkova, “Alternative Politics | International Academic Journal - Article,” *Alternatifpolitika*, February 2016, <https://alternatifpolitika.com/eng/makale/on-feminisms-in-czech-political-contexts>.

supported cultural gatherings and let their salons become centers of cultural and political discourse. This although not necessarily profound provided subtle aid to the movement, and was a sure form of political engagement, that over time helped women carve more agency. Similarly, women's ability to channel Czech traditions and folklore helped reinforce national identity and gave rise to female authors like Božena Němcová. Seen as a role model to women for her ability to make substantial contributions to the revival and Czech society despite her assigned traditional gender role. It is remarked on by Andrea Česneková that this along with the rise of feminism and newfound possibilities for women still couldn't profoundly change the confined social understanding of women as daughters, wives and mothers.¹⁶

Whilst the roles of women remained largely traditional and within the assigned gender roles constrained by societal expectations, women within their scope of possibility made great contributions to the cultural and intellectual landscape during the Czech National Revival¹⁷ and set the groundwork for future advancements in women's rights.

2. Authorial Context

This thesis aims to examine how men and women writers of the 19th Century Czech National Revival utilized ethnological components to characterize women in their writing. The choice to focus on the following authors from the 19th century; Karel Jaromír Erben, Božena Němcová, Karel Hynek Mácha, and Eliška Krásnohorská stems from their success and individuality allowing for a more comprehensive view on the time period.

All listed authors are considered to be among the most influential of their time and for the Czech National Revival. Their works are comprised and mirror the cultural, literary, and ethnological characteristics of the movement whilst remaining unique from one another. One of the key differences is their gender and level of expertise. As has been said these authors are modern-day legends but it wasn't always so. Their lifestyle influencing their literary stylistic choices caused varied receptions and make up for a more interesting ethnological study. Furthermore, the type of texts for which they were praised strongly differ in narrative techniques. Whilst some focus on prose, others explore lyrical and poetic forms. This part of the thesis aims

¹⁶ Andrea Česneková, "Pojetí Ženy v Dějinách Kultury," 2010, https://is.muni.cz/th/203233/pedf_m/Zena_v.pdf.

¹⁷ Jan Matonoha, *Česká Literatura v Perspektivách Genderu*, 1st ed. (Akropolis, 2010), 69–70.

to provide context into the lives of each author chosen and hint at differences that might have influenced their literary stylistic choices.

2.1 Karel Jaromír Erben

One of the most accomplished Czech authors of his generation and still celebrated today Karel Jaromír Erben was born in 1811, a small town in Bohemia. This is important to note as it meant early exposure to oral traditions and folklore that had a profound influence on his later work. Studying in Prague, legal studies were not his only passion, as he was also deeply engrossed in history, Slavic studies, and of course folklore. It was, however, not until his acquaintance with František Palacký that he was able to truly act upon those passions.¹⁸ On that note Erben's career path took many forms; lawyer, historian, archivist, and folklorist allowing for a broader and more specific understanding of Czech cultural identity and earning him membership in 1841 in the Royal Bohemian Society of Sciences.¹⁹ Finally, this was exemplified, as he became the lead archivist in 1851, thus Erben had access to extensive historical documents raising his cultural, literary, and scholarly potential in the revival. One of his greatest contributions, however, stems from his work as a folklorist. Erben had dedicated much of his life to the preservation of Czech folk songs, stories, and legends, for which he would conduct long trips to the countryside allowing him to not only absorb traditions, tales, etc. but also pick up on colloquialisms that he would then use in his literary works (helping preserve the language). Drawing inspiration from the Grimm brothers, Erben believed in drawing in the success of national literature rested upon drawing from ethnic backgrounds.

During his life, Erben managed to publish a great deal of literary and educational material. Alongside historical documents he also published translations of Russian literature and contributed to other famous revivalists efforts during his time. One of his more unique contributions includes *Riegrův slovník naučný* less commonly known as the first Czech General Encyclopedia. Some of his other famous publications include the following: *Folk Songs of Bohemia* 1942/45, *Czech Folk Songs and Nursery Rhymes* 1864, *One Hundred Slavic Folktales*

¹⁸ "Karel Jaromír Erben," Literární Doupě, accessed June 19, 2024, <https://ld.johannesville.net/erben/zivotopis?bio=1&fig=1>.

¹⁹ Jaroslava Hoffmannová and Jana Pražáková, *Biografický Slovník Archivářů Českých Zemi* (Libri, 2000), 164–65.

and Legends in Original Dialects 1865, and Selection of Folktales and Legends from other Slavic Branches 1869 with many others being released after his death. With various health complications and almost all siblings dead, Karel Jaromír Erben died in 1870 at 59 years old. His work has since inspired many generations of writers. One of the most recognizable in today's time is "Rusalka" a famous opera composed by Antonín Dvořák and the poet Jaroslav Kvapil drawing inspiration from Erben's fairytales. On that note, Antonín Dvořák also composed several other poems based on Erben's work.²⁰

Erben is by far the most equipped of the authors chosen for his position in the Czech National Revival. Likewise, his accomplishments in the revival are broad, and public reception of his work is generally positive. With him adding the most on the ethnological front. His main characters also tend to be women aligning with the intent of the thesis.

2.2 Karel Hynek Mácha

Born in Prague in 1810 with the name Ignác Mácha (that he later changed to Karel Hynek Mácha) is best known for his contribution and exploration of Czech Romanticism. Mácha developed an interest in the arts early on. Studying at the Academy of Law in Prague he soon became involved in the palpably growing literary art scene at the time for the first time under the influence of the Romantic movement. Besides his volunteer work in theatres it wasn't until 1932 that Mácha had committed himself to his interests and officially withdrew from philosophy (he continued his law studies graduated in 1836, and began under Jungman's lectures to publish his work in the local newspaper.²¹ His works remained mostly unfinished, however, as only a month later after his first child had been born, Mácha himself died of infection at only 26 years old.

His works included historical tales from which only one was successfully completed; *Křivoklad* (1834). This work had it been more known could have been recognized for its revivalist nature, especially considering Mácha's interest in history. Other works he published are *Márinka* (1834) and *Cikáni* (published only after his death). Unlike Erben who drew inspiration

²⁰ Raymond Johnston, "On This Day in 1811: Celebrated Czech Fairy Tale Writer Erben Was Born," Expats, November 7, 2022, <https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/on-this-day-folk-tale-writer-k-j-erben-was-born-211-years-ago>.

²¹ "Karel Hynek Mácha," Literární Doupě, accessed June 23, 2024, <https://ld.johanesville.net/macha>.

from the Grimm brothers and remained within the revivalist ideals, Mácha drew inspiration from worldly authors like Shakespeare and most prevalently Byron. Ironically however, as was mentioned previously, Czech Romanticism remained heavily underdeveloped, most arguably due to Mácha's - the presently understood founding father of Czech Romanticism - negative reception among the population and other revivalists. Mácha unlike the other authors chosen, has deliberately made choices that deviated significantly enough from the notions of the revival that fellow artists including František Ladislav Čelakovský, Jan Slavomír Tomíček, and Josef Kajetan Tyl voiced critique.²² More accurately comparing Mácha's writing - accurately - to Byronism. Mácha's legacy as an author and cultural icon endures to the present day, exemplifying the great interplay between the literary arts, nature, and the national identity of the Czech people.

Mácha, the seemingly younger and less experienced of the two male authors would set the basis for an interesting study. Furthermore, he is not recognized for his ethnological achievements but rather for his writing style and willingness to explore worldly influences outside the intentions of the revival, thus making him an 'outlier' of the 19th-century revival. Only after death did his choice begin to be understood as a part of the revival. More accurately, in the sense that his work was recognized as a literary innovation, showing off the ability of Czech authors to follow worldly trends and ultimately solidifying Bohemia's position in Europe again.

2.3 Božena Němcová

Božena Němcová, born as Barbora Novotná in 1820 Vienna was a significant figure within the context of the Czech National Revival and a prominent representative of modern Czech prose and ethnography. Her life was unfortunately marked by continual hardship. It is, however, important to note her grandmother, a defined countryside woman who raised her - who may have influenced her future writing and general connection to rural society and her marriage to a customs officer Josef Němec at the age of 17 years old. The couple and their relationship had since then experienced significant strain due to financial difficulties, their character differences, and his job requirements that demanded them to move about Czech lands with their four children. Despite this, Němcová was able to 'infiltrate' and actively engage with the sphere of

²² "Kritika Máje," Český jazyk, June 20, 2008, <https://cz-jazyk.studentske.cz/2008/06/kritika-mje.html>.

intellectuals whilst she stayed in Prague in the early 1940s. Whilst traveling she was also able to connect to the world of the countryside, collect tales, and stories, and ultimately appreciate the overall simplicity of the peoples' everyday lives. Her life since then has only experienced decline, first, her and her husband's unofficial separation after he was accused of conspiracy, hence her living away from her husband with the children alone in poverty, eventual official divorce, and lastly her crumbling health that only worsened with her son's death.²³ She died at the age of 41 years of age in 1862.

During her lifetime Božena Němcová wrote all forms of literary narratives for many newspapers. The spoken word she came across during her travels has led to many creations all encompassing Czech legends, tales, stories, and more, that are now recognized for their realistic portrayals of the simple folk (especially women) and rural life. She is known for her detailed depictions of Czech customs and traditions in line with the goals of the Czech National Revival. Her literature is usually centered around female protagonists with hints of social critique towards societal norms. This slight change misaligned with the Biedermeier influence under which most of her literary works are defined.

Božena Němcová is also the more well-known of the two women authors chosen, with almost equal ethnological achievements and contributions as Karel Jaromír Erben. Her meticulous documentation of customs, and the basis of human lives she represents the more real and less fairytale-like author among those chosen. Not to mention, as was stated earlier, specifically her well-kept attention to the lives of women whilst being a woman author herself living in a time full of limitations will most certainly provide for an interesting comparison to her male counterparts within the selection.

2.4 Eliška Krásnohorská

Born as Alžběta Pechová in 1847 in Prague to a large family of values toward education and culture, she was exposed to art early on. Her life followed suit. She never married and as a prominent poet, writer, and open feminist, dutifully dedicated her life to education, women's rights, and literature. Krásnohorská attended a private German school and even extended her

²³ "Božena Němcová - Životopis," Literární Doupe, accessed June 19, 2024, <https://ld.johannesville.net/nemcova>.

education with independent studies taught on the side and went on to receive her doctoral degree at Charles University in 1922.²⁴

During her life she wrote in very diverse literary genres, from poetry, literary critique, poetry to librettos; most famously operas of Bedřich Smetana. She was also a translator bringing in much literature to the Czech sphere. Her translator work mostly included romantic authors including Byron. During her time, Krásnohorská dedicated most of her life to feminism. She along with her long-time friend Karolina Světlá - a fellow female author - became editors of the 'Womens List' also sometimes referred to as the feminist magazine and chairperson of - one of the first of its kind in the Austrian Empire - what is in English referred to as the Women's Production Association. A charity and education-driven association for women, active from 1871 to 1972.²⁵ Among some of the association's greatest accomplishments is the successfully founded first girl high school in 1890. She also published one of the first-ever reflections on women's suffrage in 1881 with the release of *Ženská Otázka Česká* 'Czech Woman's Question'²⁶

Her writing although mostly focused on women and her feminist ideals, also contributed to the Czech National Revival. Especially her plight for education encouraged by her translator work, and the inclusion of women in educational opportunities that contributed to a lasting legacy. She was also a member of various other groups promoting the preservation of the Czech language and the conservation of culture. Her literary work exhibits all previously mentioned influences, especially nationalist pride. Some speculate on the influences of romanticism in her work, but overall - especially later in her writing career- she publishes literature under the influence of realism.

The youngest of the selection of authors, Krásnohorská's inclination to open feminism manifests in her writing, specifically her characterization of female protagonists, and creates a unique comparison to other authors who were not as brave in their depictions of women. Her writing was picked for its unique feminist perspective of the movement.

²⁴ "Eliška Krásnohorská - Životopis a Ocenění," Databazeknih, accessed June 24, 2024, <https://www.databazeknih.cz/zivotopis/eliska-krasnohorska-995>.

²⁵ "Ženský Výrobní Spolek Český – Feministická Praha," Ženy mohou, accessed May 20, 2024, <https://zenymohou.cz/mapa/zensky-vyrobní-spolek/>.

²⁶ Jan Václav Novák and Arne Novák, *Přehledné Dějiny Literatury České: Od Nejstarších Dob Až Po Naše Dny*, 4th ed. (1922; repr., Olomouc: Promberger, 1939), 674–77, <https://arne-novak.phil.muni.cz/node/115/pages?page=2%20Olomouc:%20Promberger>.

3. Literature

This part of the thesis will in greater detail explain the literary works *Kytice* by Karel Jaromír Erben, *Máj* by Karel Hynek Mácha, *Babička* by Božena Němcová, and lastly *Svéhlavička* by Eliška Krásnohorská. The primary ethnological components that will be looked for and examined in the literary texts will greatly vary depending on their prevalence. The key is to identify patterns and or differences among them. Likewise, it is important to keep in mind, that the research is limited by the ethnological components that tell us something about women, thus significantly narrowing down the ethnological components (simply said, just because a literary text is rich with ethnology, doesn't mean it will always provide insight into woman's lives). The list to keep in mind for which each text will be examined is the following: cultural and social structures (cultural practices, women's roles, everyday life, position in family and hierarchies), beliefs and values (religion, worldviews, virtues of women), material culture (clothing, tools, etc.).

3.1 *Kytice*

Kytice the shortened more well-known title of *Kytice z Pověstí Národních* is a collection of ballads from Karel Jaromír Erben released in 1853. The piece is to this day one of the most significant contributions to the Czech literary sphere and the Czech National Revival for its focus on folklore and cultural heritage. The collection is comprised of 13 uniquely owned ballads as of 1861, originally released with 12. The text is a type of lyric poetry focusing most primarily on themes of ethicality and exploring the repercussions of not staying within its boundaries, human relationships among one another and fantastical beings, and the flaws of being human. The first ballad of the collection “*Kytice*” in translation the bouquet, literally ties the ballads together and sets the tone for the consequent ballads with its connection to nature, death, and fate. As there are over 10 ballads in the collection the thesis will only address a few depending on how relevant it is to the topic.

3.1.1 Cultural and social structures

From the collection of ballads, Erben utilizes various cultural practices that depict the lives of women during the revival. The first example is “*Zlatý Kolovrat*” (The Golden Spinning

Wheel) where Erben focuses on courtship rituals, marriage, and craft. The ballad tells the tale of a king who wanders through the woods and encounters a beautiful maiden who he immediately falls in love with and vows to marry. Her stepmother and stepsister, however, murder her during their escort to the castle. The story is resolved with the golden spinning wheel enacting supernatural justice upon the cruel family, and the fair maiden gets her happy ending after being revived. The story revolves around the spinning wheel. The king falls in love with the maiden as she does her chores, more specifically bringing water from the well and spinning the wheel. When asking for her hand he refers to her as “the beautiful weaver.” Furthermore, when the mother tries to ‘advertise’ her own daughter to the king she upraises her value by stating her thread is like silk. It is also the spinning of the wheel that exposes the stepfamily’s wrongdoing to the king, reflecting the cultural significance of spinning and weaving for women of the time (this is also depicted in the ballad “Svatební Košile” (Wedding Shirts) where her lovers time gone is measured by shirt making). Of great importance is also the escort, as women were not permitted to walk about unchaperoned, - also a critique of Eliška Krásnohorská who used to walk places alone²⁷- it also reflects upon the traditions regarding the bride’s transition into her home (also more common for the women to leave to live with the man). Likewise, it was her potential for an advantageous marriage that caused her family’s jealousy, suggesting an invisible hierarchy of superiority based on one’s marriage, further promoting the concept of marriage as an economic and social advancement.

Another significant cultural practice showcased by Erben is in the ballad “Štědrý Den” (Christmas Eve). The ballad tells the story of a community gathering, with two female protagonists curious about their future. Introducing a future-telling tradition using a mirror and a candle they go to the lake hoping to glimpse their future husband. One of the girls indeed does see her husband, the other, however, a coffin. It ultimately serves as a cautious tale against curiosity about one’s fate. More simply a different take on the quote ‘curiosity killed the cat.’ In relevance to gender, however, the ballad utilizes this cultural practice to showcase the mergence of the future and marriage. In other words, the importance of marriage for women in determining their future happiness. With that in mind, it is fascinating that only two options were presented by Erben, and that is marriage or death. Likewise in his ballad “Věštyně” (Phrophehtess) Erben

²⁷ “Ženský Výrobní Spolek Český – Feministická Praha,” Ženy mohou, accessed May 20, 2024, <https://zenymohou.cz/mapa/zensky-vyrobní-spolek/>.

again draws on the connection of women to the supernatural and the tradition of fortune-telling in Bohemian culture.

On the note of marriage, motherhood seems to be the main defining trait of many of Erben's characters with a great deal of his ballads being dedicated to maternal roles. In other words, Erben often depicts mothers with many flaws, pointing to the fact they should be nurturing and selfless in raising their children. The first, and most significant ballad that comes to mind is "Polednice" (The Noon Witch). It is a short tale of a mother who's struggling to calm her screeching child and in the heat of her anger begs for the noon witch to take him away. This unfortunately does call upon the fantastical being. The mother holds the child to her chest begging the noon witch to leave them be, she presses the child to her chest harder and harder as the witch approaches eventually killing the child. This illustrates not only that mothers were expected to take care of their households and rearing the children alone, but also that they were expected to remain nurturing and calm doing so. Most mothers in his ballads also remain nameless, defining their character only by their gender role.

3.1.2 Beliefs and Values

Beliefs and values are too significantly explored by Erben. Almost, if not all his characters are depicted to believe in the higher power even if it is not explicitly said. In the 'moral universe' of sorts Erben depicted in *Kytice*, the higher power often comes in the form of justice or retribution. Those who Erben depicts as wrongdoers by societal standards are punished by external forces. Wrongdoers and immorality as such are classified by the values of the character mirroring the values of the time.

One of the values depicted in his ballad with the most severe punishment is in "Vodník" showcasing the power of listening and promise. The female protagonist at first does not listen to her mother warning her not to go to the lake because she had a bad dream. The girl does not listen and consequently falls into a lake where she becomes the lake creature's wife and mothers their child. She begs him to let her go see her mother. He lets her go with the condition of returning by midnight and leaving the child behind as he fears the folly of a woman's mind ("lichê mysli ženské")²⁸ and she promises to be back. She does not keep her promise to her

²⁸ Karel Jaromír Erben, *Karel Jaromír Erben Kytice / České Pohádky* (1853; repr., Brno: Host, 2013), 85.

husband and he kills their child. This of course suggests that promises shouldn't be broken, but more importantly, adds to the expectations placed on the woman as a wife and a mother. As was previously discussed women who were defined by being mothers were to exhibit selfless and nurturing traits ultimately meant to prioritise the wellbeing of their child over their own coinciding with real expectations placed on women discussed previously.²⁹ This theme can also be found in the second ballad "Poklad" where a woman prioritizes riches over her child as she carries them out of a cave before her baby. She is then punished and the baby is then taken from her. In fact, it is the introductory ballad "Kytice" that teaches us how far a mother's devotion should go. The deceased mother and her children, cannot bear to see the sorrow of her children, and hence her soul comes back in the form of an herb, to provide comfort in her scent. The role of a mother does not stop even post-death, and how good of a mother the woman is defines her value.³⁰

Erben also illustrates religion as a central virtue of women and demonstrates that faith and piety are strengths and forms of salvation. Or more specifically, their loyalty and devotion to God. In the ballad "Svatební košile" (The Wedding Shirts), the female protagonist's unfaltering faith and prayers are what saves her from her punishment taking the form of her beloved or rather his ghost. The punishment, to begin with, is from the woman's abuse of religion, and her request of Saint Mary to return her love even if it means shortening her own life. Her blasphemy is condemned, and her punishment is the ghost of her beloved, stripping her of holy objects that help her practice religion (rosary, religious books, and her mother's cross) on the way to their 'wedding'. Only thanks to praying to God, Jesus Christ, and Saint Mary does she live to see the day. This notion of religious worship merges with a general understanding of innocence and virtue. Both types of characters are considered on the side of 'good' and 'moral.' This is hinted at in the ballad "Zlatý Kolovrat" (The Golden Spinning Wheel), in which the dutiful, virtuous maiden undeserving of her suffering is offered a second chance at life, and marries the king. Likewise in "Lilie" (Lily), where the personified Lily, is a wife and mother to a man whose mother wishes for her death. Prior to her marriage, the man notices the white lily and 'picks' her out to take home with him. The white lily symbolizes purity and goodness - similar to the one that made the king pick the weaver. Thus portraying the clear advantage and ultimate triumph of

²⁹ Jan Matonoha, *Česká Literatura v Perspektivách Genderu*, 1st ed. (Akropolis, 2010), 69–70.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 70.

goodness over deceit. Women are portrayed as being devout and ‘pure’ with religious faith a great component of their identity. This although not entirely explanatory of the time as “in the 19th-century, religion ceased to play a significant role in international politics as well as in inner politics in individual European states.” and “the Catholic anti-modern endeavor led to the alienation of the Catholic Church from the liberal thinking Czech society.”³¹ Remains a standard expectation or rather a depiction of women consequential to hundreds of years of assigned gender roles, especially to those born and raised outside big cities; Karel Jaromír Erben.

3.2 *Máj*

Máj Karel Hynek Mácha’s single lyric epic poem from 1836. The text explores themes of existential contemplation, death, love, and nature and under the influence of the Romanticism movement illustrates a story of a doomed romance. The title today is understood as the crowning work of Czech Romanticism. The tale tells is of two lovers, Vilém and Jarmila. Vilém, thrown out by his father while still only a boy, catalyzed his path of becoming a bandit group leader. He awaits his own death, for the murder of Jarmila’s seducer who unexpectedly came to be to be his estranged father. Jarmila waiting for her lover by the lake is shocked it is not Vilém who emerges, but a companion informing her of her lover’s fate. The doomed love’s tale ends with Vilém coming to terms with and accepting his death, and Jarmila throws herself into the lake and drowns shortly after hearing the news.

3.2.1 Beliefs and Values

It is significant to note, that in Mácha’s writing the ethnological components most related to women are within people’s relationships. The plot is hidden in the depths of nature's appreciative poetry and one must derive the events of the tale. With that said, despite the term seducer³² being used in the literary text to describe the state of Vilém’s father’s relation to Jarmila, several interpretations exist that question the very basis of one’s understanding of the tale. Among the most common sources available depicting the plot of the story, the father is

³¹ Petr Rattay, “Atheism in the Czech Republic,” *Apoštolská Církev*, n.d., <https://apostolskacirkev.cz/studijni-texty/studijni-texty>.

³² Karel Hynek Mácha, *Máj*, 1400th ed. (1836; repr., Dobrovský, 2022).

referred to in the following terms: ctimelem (admirer),³³ svůdce (seducer),³⁴ rapist or abuser (“zneužil jiný muž”).³⁵ Depending on the definition, Jarmila’s choice to jump into the lake can play into the concept of loyalty. If the story is understood as Jarmila not having a choice in the affair with Vilém’s father, her tragic end can be seen as the ultimate act of love and of unconditional loyalty. Thus highlighting women’s value and belief in a highly committed love. If, however, the story is understood as Jarmila having a choice in the affair with Vilém’s father, then her tragic end can be interpreted as retribution for being disloyal, overall depicting the ideal woman as someone loyal, showcasing severe consequences if not followed. The same can be applied to love, that arises with either interpretation, of the tale. Understandable for the romanticism movement, both characters experience intense emotions. Where in one, her love is so strong she cannot bear to live without her Vilém, and in the other her love is so decrepit and frail she must face her punishment for allowing herself to stray. Regardless of the interpretation of the story, the woman is seen as a highly emotional being vulnerable to the decisions and actions of men, her only description being of her beauty.

It is, however, the prison scene that belongs to one of the most famous of his works and deserves great attention. The scene is marked by influences of the revival and is set in prison, where Vilém awaiting his death contemplates his love and relationship to his nation. Nation within the context of the scene is described as a woman (with feminine conjugations) and ultimately personifies the nation itself as a mother. Kristýna Ljubková’s interpretation is the following:

“Muž sedící ve vězení se krátce zamýšlí nad osudem lidí, kteří žijí ve stejné zemi jako on, a přesto svou vlast nepovažují za něco, co by měli milovat: ‘(...) a synové její, synové hanby, plesají nad bídou matky své a usmívajíce se mluví: Aj žena! a nevzpomínají, že byla matkou jejich a že jsou pošli z lůna matky své.’ Jak mohou milovat muži své matky, když nerespektují ani zem, která je živila, vychovala a dala jim kus sebe?”³⁶

³³ “Máj: Rozbor Díla, Obsah, Stručný Děj, Téma a Další Info,” Definus, January 22, 2024, <https://www.definus.cz/magazin/maj-rozbor-dila/#htoc-rozbor-d-la-m-j>.

³⁴ “Máj: Rozbor,” Český-jazyk.cz, November 28, 2013, <https://www.cesky-jazyk.cz/ctenarsky-denik/karel-hynek-macha/maj-rozbor.html>.

³⁵ “Máj - Rozbor Díla,” Rozbor-dila.cz, July 18, 2012, <https://rozbor-dila.cz/maj-rozbor-dila-k-maturite-8/>.

³⁶ Kristýna Ljubková, “Karel Hynek Mácha a Jeho Ženy (Genderovost a Feminita v Díle K. H. Máchy),” 2008,

Vilém, as he sits in prison contemplates the future of people who live in the same nation as him and yet do not recognize it as something worthy of love going on to suggest men are the nation's 'sons' and 'she' is their mother which they should love with the same vigor as they do their own, 'she' after all has fed them, raised them, and given them a piece of herself. This value portrayed is once more a connection to the topic of motherhood. Showcasing that femininity and maternity go hand in hand. In other words the value of a woman, is to be a mother who raises and takes care of her children.

Mácha only includes two, if not one and a half female 'characters' into his story. Both are defined by their relationships. Wife (or partner), and a mother. Hence the value of women is within their traditional gender roles.

3.3 *Babička*

Babička in English meaning "grandmother" is a novella by Božena Němcová released in 1855. The novella is considered one of the greatest contributions to Czech literature for its rich ethnographical illustrations of rural everyday life. The novella made Božena Němcová a key contributing figure of the Czech National Revival and one of the most famous Czech authors. The novella is centered around the character of a loving and wise grandmother, who soon becomes the spiritual guide and anchor to her community, in the nostalgic depiction of country life in Ratibořice, where Němcová spent many years as a child.

The plot begins with the arrival of the main character, the grandmother into the village to live with her family and estranged grandchildren, after her daughter's request to move in with them, as her husband's work has brought them to Bohemia. The grandmother only brought a few of her possessions reinforcing the notion also explored in the novel that satisfaction can be achieved with little and less so with material possessions. She soon becomes a role model and a key figure in the lives of the children and the community, exploring their shared everyday lives. Going on walks to the forest to pick berries, oral folktale bedtime stories, flower crowns, power of herbs church, and more, further pushing the novella's ethnological components. As the tale goes on we are introduced to more and more characters (mostly women) coming from different

https://dk.upce.cz/bitstream/handle/10195/29538/LjubkovaK_Karel%20Hynek_IR_2008.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

classes and families, most relevant, the ‘princess’ and Viktorka another village girl who goes insane following a romantic affair with a soldier and alone and ‘crazy’ roams the forests. As time goes on in the story, death is also explored by the author. Firstly with Viktorka. And eventually, grandmother herself.

3.3.1 Cultural and Social Structures

From the novella, Němcová illustrates various cultural practices that explore the lives of women, more specifically providing insight into cultural practices, roles, everyday life, position in the family, and hierarchies.

One of the most significant explorations is the grandmother’s role in the household. She cooks, cleans, tends to the garden, weaves, and oversees the upbringing of her daughter's kids. This is further explored during the Christmas tradition where grandmother cooks deliberate traditional meals. This is also explored by showcasing the fulfillment of being a mother and the joy of family life often advertised to women. Women are hence depicted as figures central to maintaining the household and ensuring the well-being of the family.³⁷

That aspect is also explored by the grandmother’s herbal knowledge rooted in her understanding of traditional medicine. Throughout the novella, she prepares various herbal teas, remedies, and poultices with the novella suggesting grandmother was always able to help and that she herself never had to see a doctor. “Když byl někdo nemocen, to už babička hned měla některé koření připravené, hořký jetel pro vytrávení, řepíček pro krku bolení a pod.; lékaře ona jaktěživa neměla.”³⁸ Outside providing deeper insight into the sorts of remedies existing during the time, Němcová illustrates women as knowledgeable healers who can be trusted with the health of the community. This is also pushed by the mountain herbal woman. This way despite ultimately keeping in line with traditional gender roles of women also gives them dimension.

As was suggested previously, Grandmother soon became an active member of society, becoming a mentor and anchor of wisdom for those close to her regardless of their class and origin. Women, especially older women, are integral parts of society. Acting as mediators,

³⁷ Barbora Babická, “Genderová Analýza Hlavních Ženských Postav Babičky Boženy Němcové,” 2016, <https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/83984/120237629.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

³⁸ Božena Němcová, *Babička* (1855; repr., Česká Knihnice, Host, 2017), 78.

advisors, and emotional supporters. This type of engagement acts similar to the one previously mentioned, more specifically, giving women more credit for their traditional role. Likewise, on the note of mentors, one of the greatest ethnological aspects of the novella *Babička* is the power of the spoken word and mentorship which is also given more dimension and credit. *Babička* is seen on various occasions telling stories and anecdotes to both her grandchildren and other villagers in the community. The use of fairytales and storytelling is used by Němcová to highlight not only women's significant contributions to the revival by preserving culture, as they are key figures in passing it to younger generations but also to demonstrate the ethical values of the time which the thesis will address later.

3.3.2 Beliefs and Values

Although it can be argued that the grandmother comes from a different time, it is still important to note the strong sense of spirituality woven into life in the countryside. One of the foremost components showcased is the unique combination of love for God and pagan celebrations depicted in the novella. The family attends church every Sunday and follows the general rituals of religion. Grandmother however, also as a mentor to the family leads the family in prayer during several occasions and explains the need to attend church service. She is by far illustrated as the most dedicated practicante of christianity described to “V létě vstávala babička ve čtyři, v zimě v pět hodin. První její bylo požehnat se a políbit křížek vysíce na klokočovém růženci, ježž ona vždy při sobě nosila, v noci pak pod hlavou měla. Pak s Pánembohem vstala, a jsouc ustrojena, pokropila se světcenou vodou, vzala vřetánko a předla, prospěvujíc si přitom ranní písň.”³⁹ (In translation in summer she would wake up at four, and in winter at five. First she would bless herself and then kiss her cross hanging on bladder nut rosary which she always carried, and then at night have under her pillow. Then with God she woke up, and once dressed, sprinkled herself with holy water, took the spindle and spun, singing morning songs). Her relationship with God is seen as a central virtue and seems to summarise her character as good. Pushing the notion of religion.

With that in mind, another value of the time is goodness. With the use of fairytales and community involvement, the protagonist illustrates the benefits of being good and having good intentions. The fairytales are not properly described but are well-known folktales each teaching

³⁹ Božena Němcová, *Babička* (1855; repr., Česká Knížnice, Host, 2017), 19.

their individual lessons advising children to be good and portraying virtuous characters who are more likely to succeed and get rewarded (some fairytales listed are “Karkulka” (Red Riding Hood), “Princezna se Zlatou Hvězdou na Čele” (Princess with a golden star on her forehead). Likewise, Němcová demonstrates, that by being kind, selfless, and honest, you can make friends and help many. An example that comes to mind is the grandmother providing advice based on informed interpretations to the princess, and the neighbors in both cases resolving the conflict.

More in line with the Czech National Revival is also the value of Bohemia explored through the concept of motherhood. Outside the many depictions of the Czech countryside and its beauty, is also the suggestion of Grandmother choosing Bohemia as the one place suitable for raising her children. During her discussion with the princess, the grandmother tells the tale of her and her beloved and her family’s fate after his death. She states that they have offered her money, a job, her son a place in the military, and the girls a promised attendance at the Royal Institute for women. She goes on to explain that she does not want to give up her children, wanting to raise them in line with her values and her tongue. This however was met with condemnation and she was told she would get none of it. Her response was accepting in the sense of ‘if nothing, then nothing it is, God will not let me starve.’ The princess goes on to say that her children would have had a good life. Grandmother agrees but goes on to say her children would have been estranged from their tongue, motherland and blood, raised in foreign lands finally stating, that if had let it happen she could not answer to God. “(...) byly by se mi odcizily. Kdo by je tam byl učil milovat svoji otčinu a mateřskou svoji řeč? Nikdo. Byly by se cizí řeči, cizím mravům naučily a konečně zcela zapoměly na svoji krev. Jakkpak bych se mohla z toho před pánembohem zodpovídat?”⁴⁰

3.3.2.1 Material Culture

Material culture is depicted on various occasions. Especially in terms of clothing, it differentiates the classes of women present in the novella. Outside the obvious visual and wealth differentiation it is remarked on by grandmother that simplicity suits her comforts more as she prefers the clothes she is used to. It is, however, the values of the traditional that is worthy of note. Grandmother shows the grandchildren her clothing proud to note their age and legacy. “Vidíte, děti, tuhle kanafasku mám už padesát let, tenhle kabátek nosívala vaše prababička, tento

⁴⁰ Ibid, 16.

fěrtoch je tak starý jako vaše matka, a všechno jako nové. A vy máte šaty hned zmýcené.”⁴¹ (You see, children, I have had this skirt for fifty years, this coat was worn by your great-grandmother, this fěrtoch is as old as your mother, and everything is as new. And you have your clothes ripped right away). This refers to the power of the traditional, the objects that have legacy and how having been passed down adds to their value. It also shows, that despite there being nothing wrong with women with modern and rich tastes, in connection to the Czech National Revival, the familiarity, and willingness to continue to add to the legacy and preservation of the traditional is more valuable. This ultimately depicts another way in which women especially those in the countryside carried history.

The idea of clothing also has the potential of stripping a person of their humanity, as we can see in ‘crazy’ Viktorka. Her madness is also illustrated with the help of appearance, as can be seen later is commonly done to women. The first scene follows the kids asking grandmother, why Viktorka never has any nice clothes, not even on Sunday.⁴² She is since referred to as a ‘trhan’ (rag-wearing) with her hair wild continuously. At one point it is even remarked that she is suited for isolation. “Ona se hodí do té samoty.”⁴³ Further playing into the concept of community and the expectations of women to dress a certain way under societal pressure of not being accepted or being associated with madness.

3.4 *Svéhlavička* 1899

Svéhlavička, an 1899 novel by Eliška Krásnohorská translated to “The Stubborn Head.” The novel is a prominent exploration of a woman navigating the world during the Czech National Revival, exploring feministic themes of individualism, independence, and the struggle of a woman who challenges traditional expectations fighting against societal norms.

The plot centers on the protagonist Zdenka, “The Stubborn Head who is referred to as such, for her independent nature and dominant personality remarked by the novel to be the result of her father spoiling her. She lives in a small town with her traditionally conservative family which slowly causes friction as her defiance against her stepmother increases. After Zdenka’s

⁴¹ Ibid, 13.

⁴² Ibid, 17.

⁴³ Ibid, 184.

behavior only gets worse, with her refusal to comply and behave, hence driving all her educators away she is sent to a women's boarding school. In the boarding school, despite her initial rocky start, is able to form meaningful friendships that are supportive and help her gain new perspectives. The story introduces us to Ellen who lost both her parents, her influence on Zdenka is significant and she slowly comes to terms with the school and finds peace with it, slowly becoming an educated young lady.

3.4.1 Cultural and Social Structures

The novel written by the feminist author Krásnohorská provides insight into the social roles of women with the underlying topic of motherhood. This includes the absence of Zdenka's mother as the catalyst for her wild behavior. Suggesting it is up to the woman to raise the children toward ideal members of society. This is further pushed by the fact it wasn't until her Stepmother entered her life that Zdenka's life experienced a stir pushing her toward propriety, manners, and traditional female duties. Portraying both the importance of a mother in the life of children in stirring them toward conventional gender roles, but also that child rearing is the woman's duty.

3.4.2 Beliefs and Values

A part of the text too explores the social expectations placed upon women of the time This means the continuous push the protagonist Zdenka experiences to act a certain way that is acceptable to the ladies. This comes down to morals, manners, propriety, and traditional gender roles. "Každý den abych ted' poslouchala dlouhé kázání, co je mrav a slušnost, a já přece nechci být jako dáma, nechci,"⁴⁴ Depicting the high importance of women possessing such traits. In fact not possessing said traits strips her of being referred to as a woman in general, for within the confines of her behavior, she is not seen as one. The term her mother uses is "neženská"⁴⁵ translating directly to 'not woman.' Krasnohorská also connects this to the importance of education, where Zdenka is only shown possessing previously stated traits after she stops

⁴⁴ Eliška Krásnohorská, *Svéhlavička* (1899; repr., Městská knihovna v Praze, 2018), 6, <https://web2.mlp.cz/koweb/00/04/44/37/15/svehlavicka.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 11.

refusing education. That is not to say the type of education she received was meant to prepare her for work opportunities, but rather - being available to girls from richer families - for her life as a future companion to her husband, a mother to their children, and a homemaker.⁴⁶ This can also be seen from her pivotal point in the boarding school, where she starts to realize her own shortcomings and points to how incredibly better the other girls are at, drawing, and playing the piano. “Ellen a ostatní děvčata mnohem více vědí a jsou všechny chytřejší než já (...) a Ellen hraje na piano, že by mohla dávat koncerty! Já však neumím nic, pranic!”⁴⁷ pointing to the importance and significant value of education in the lives of women.

On that note, it is also important to note the importance of community, portraying women as social creatures who do better in communities rather than seclusion and isolation. In the first part of the novel Zdenka truly does not resemble a lady, nor a person with any sense of manners. She is depicted as a wild girl, who wears ripped clothes and does not take care of herself, plays with the dogs, keeps frogs, and so on. She presumably does not have any friends and is not in contact with anyone her age. This is commented on by Nela Macháčková as an approach completely out of line with the conventions of the time.⁴⁸ As suggested in the plot and the quote from *Svéhlavička* herself stems from being among her peers - especially Ellen - and seeing the contrast between herself and them. This is an understandable plot point as before being in contact with girls her age, she had no one to compare herself to and thus understand why her behavior wouldn't be tolerated. Women with Zdenka's behavior at the start of the novel were called “bláznivé” (crazy) and would most often be refused by society, facing either condemnation or being placed into a monastery.⁴⁹ This is exaggerated by their isolation further presses the notion, that women are social creatures prone to going mad in their isolation.

Likewise due to her peers and her education she also slowly becomes virtuous in the eyes of God and eventually prays herself. The institute includes prayers for food and others certainly influenced Zdenka, but her friends, being devoted Christians also contributed to her salvation. This further encourages the notion it was expected of girls to have a sense of piety.

⁴⁶ Nela Macháčková, “Dívčí Výchovně-Vzdělávací Literatura Z Přelomu 19. A 20. Století,” 2019, <https://theses.cz/id/wym1wh/STAG88438.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Eliška Krásnohorská, *Svéhlavička* (1899; repr., Městská knihovna v Praze, 2018), 49, <https://web2.mlp.cz/koweb/00/04/44/37/15/svehlavicka.pdf>.

⁴⁸ Nela Macháčková, “Dívčí Výchovně-Vzdělávací Literatura Z Přelomu 19. A 20. Století,” 2019, <https://theses.cz/id/wym1wh/STAG88438.pdf>.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 47-50

3.4.2.1 Material Culture

Clothing is used on several occasions to portray the social standards expected of women in *Svéhlavička*. With clothing representing the quality of the woman. That is not to say the monetary value of the dress, but rather the way in which the clothes are taken care of by the female character. It is remarked very early on that Zdenka's dressing style is incoherent with the expectations for a woman her age and a woman in the general sense. The scene follows the stepmother telling Zdenka to change for they have guests. This is followed by her request that if Zdenka does not change, she is not to join them for dinner and is to eat within the confinement of her room.⁵⁰ This further presses the importance of looking 'decent' for women. Forced into isolation if she is not compliant in dressing in accordance with the tradition. The true condemnation of Zdenka concerning her clothes is whilst packing, truly painting her out as someone careless and unwomanly. She packs her blue dress with a ripped blouse, and dirtied leather waist which she throws into her luggage without folding, and proceeds to add her boots as they are, with dried mud.⁵¹ This significantly contrasts with how her fellow female peers in school behave, with the contrast demonstrating just how important it is for a woman to treat her clothing with dignified respect reflecting upon her value.

4. Comparative analysis and informed interpretation

4.1 Male Authors

The texts that were examined were *Kytice* by Karel Jaromír Erben and *Máj* by Karel Hynek Mácha. Both texts vary significantly. Erben, an author writing under the influence of the Czech National Revival, provided more insight into not only the ethnological components and its depiction of women but also used female characters way more often allowing for a more diverse study. This besides the impact of the revival and the actual length of each text allows for a more well-rounded depiction of women's character. It is also important to note that Erben's writing

⁵⁰ Ibid, 6.

⁵¹ Ibid, 15.

stems from folkloric research and therefore reflects on women beyond his own perception.

Simply said in Mácha's writing, only a few characters exist. The only other connection to women outside his female protagonist is the female personification of the nation. Centered on being worthy of love for 'she' has raised you, fed you, and given you a part of herself. Ultimately portraying women with the expectation of being devoted to their husbands and their roles as mothers. Erben too dedicated a great deal of his ballads to the concept of love and motherhood. Similarly to Mácha (depending on the interpretation), he showcased the ideal traits of women by punishing the women whose actions were deemed immoral or unvirtuous. Motherhood is explained through Erben in more detail than Mácha, who suggests a mother is worthy of love simply after raising her children. Erben pushes that children should be the mother's priority at every given time and that children's happiness should be put in front of the mothers. Should her priorities change she is to be punished. Ultimately setting an example of what it meant to be a woman worthy of societal acceptance in the 19th-century. Both authors, outside of punishing those who are the less ideal gender representatives - often used as examples made to guide people - also provided balance by writing ideal gender representatives of their assigned gender roles. This is important as not only does it showcase punishment, but gives a sense of justice in being 'good' (in Mácha's text, the nation/mother is worthy of love for she raised her children, in Erben's text good characters get supernatural justice) pushing the idea that following traditional gender roles and exhibiting the traits discussed in their separate analysis, women can be compensated.

Erben however, illustrates traits that are beyond those of motherhood. Within his ballads, Erben points out hobbies; weaving, spinning, and sewing, that make a woman more appealing. Likewise, many of his female characters are religious. Erben pushes this notion further and highlights the significance of purity and goodness for a female character. Exhibiting those traits often allows his female characters to find a husband or save their lives. On that note, although Erben achieves this through the concept of religion, the trait of loyalty within it connects to *Máj* as well. Loyalty is also explored by Erben through promises. He points to the danger of the fickleness of a woman's mind and shows how serious the consequences of breaking promises to one's husband can be. This is in line with the notions of *Máj*. The only insight into who his female protagonist is, is given by her connections to men in the story. That is, depending on our take on the story, the singular relationships that the female protagonist has are meant to form our

opinion of her. Mácha writing under the influence of Romanticism centers this on love and loyalty. Suggesting the expectation of women to be devoted to their loved ones and depending on the interpretation of the story, face the consequences of being disloyal.

4.1 Female Authors

The texts examined within this category were *Babička* by Božena Němcová, and *Svéhlavička* by Eliška Krásnohorská. The two female authors are diverse in their contrasting depictions of society mostly stemming from their choice of characters, one older woman in the deep countryside, whilst the other is a young woman in a women's institute. Both authors although in different formats - most arguably due to the age difference of the authors manifesting key differences in the subtlety of their themes- focused closely on what the lives of women were like in the 19th century.

The author's writing in the portrayal of women is similar in depicting women as essential figures in the running of a household and raising children. The same is put on their chores and hobbies. The women were expected to uphold their traditional roles; cooking, cleaning, and more with minor differences in their location (Němcová highlights chores, like tending to the garden and weaving which is more rooted in the countryside, whilst Krásnohorská explores embroidery and educational material). On the topic of motherhood, the authors diverge from each other as they explore the concept in different ways, it is however significant to note that they both highlight the indisputable role of the mother in the family dynamic.

Furthermore, the notion that is pushed forward is the role of women within communities, acting as advisors and mentors. Although Němcová did this more strongly with the character of grandmother, Krásnohorská explores it indirectly through her exploration of seclusion versus community where Zdenka improves herself by comparing herself to her friends. The topic of spirituality is also brought up by both authors suggesting the importance of religion in the lives of women in the 19th century. Of course, again, Krásnohorská does this less evidently, as the grandmother is depicted as the most religious character.

Both women authors also explore the concept of material culture, specifically that of clothing. My assumption is that by being women themselves they saw the importance of clothing in the portrayal of their characters. Němcová highlights the significance of clothes to women by suggesting the bearing of tradition. Krásnohorská points to how the mistreatment of clothing

reflects upon the state of the women, also suggesting that put togetherness, and proper treatment of clothing ‘ladylike.’ this is only slightly similarly shown in the work of Němcová where ‘crazy’ Viktorka is always depicted with ragged clothing and messy hair illustrating the true extent of her madness.

As mentioned previously, however, both authors diverge in the ethnological components used based on the location of their books. Němcová focusing on an older woman in the deep countryside, explores the unique knowledge women had of traditional medicine and their experience as natural healers. Likewise, she points to the traditional folklore that was used to pass down knowledge. Krásnohorská, inevitably drawing from her own perception of education, utilizes it as the primary source of knowledge for her character, although it could be argued it from the long absence of her mother, it is school that teaches her the ways of the lady: piety, manners, homemaking, and more. The school hence becomes a significant ethnological component in her writing. Although it could be argued school was also mentioned in *Babička* it wasn’t given the same ground as other more prominent ways of teaching.

4.3 Male and Female Authors

Both female and male authors utilize various ethnological components to depict women in the 19th-century Czech National Revival. Both genders focus on the primary roles of women during the 19th century, that is their contributions to the household and family dynamics as homemakers and mothers. Besides showcasing traditional gender roles, the depiction of the mother as a significant and key element in family life, ultimately suggests a widely accepted notion of the importance of women (albeit in the conventional sense). Likewise, although in their own respective ways, the authors all provide a council of sorts on how to become the ideal representative of women. Some of those include promoting or creating traditional crafts, like cooking, weaving, and sowing. Some, expected to practice the virtuous trait of piety, also hinting at the prevalence of religious undertones in the lives of women during the 19th-century.

In the case of Erben and Němcová, with their more profound connection to the countryside, they both explore the concepts of folklore and the connection of women to herbs. This is seen with Němcová showing the herbal woman, and grandmother both familiar with the arts of traditional medicine. Erben shows this by the literal personification of women to flowers, most often herbs (an example being the first ballad “Kytice”).

This is however about as far as the similarities for both genders of authors go. Education for women is not to be found in the texts of both male authors. Outside showing the literacy of women through their bibles, there is no sign of it. School is mentioned in both texts of female authors, although with different extents and frequencies. Furthermore, although in Erben's ballads, women are shown to possess a multitude of traits, it is more often done with the amount of characters. In other words, some of his characters have names, but some for the purpose of the tale are also just referred to by their relations to men (widow, daughter, wife, mother). In the writings of female authors, we can see there is more flexibility. There are nicknames, real names, and statuses, by which women are acknowledged. Simply put although their family roles are esteemed of great importance, it does not limit them to those roles. Likewise, the female authors' choice to include the ethnological significance of clothing in the lives of their female protagonists is a significant aspect of what it meant to be a woman in the revival society, with indirect reference to how clothing defined them. Furthermore, male authors rarely include the power of women in communities. The female characters of male literature are once again limited to their relations to man (as was mentioned previously, widow, daughter, wife, mother). Their characters rarely have friends and if they do, they don't stay alive for long, or aren't seen talking about anything but their future husbands pushing the notion of both marriages.

The female authors also do not illustrate the failure to practice traditional gender roles as a matter of life and death (or punishable by some scary creature who kills your loved ones). Female authors themselves see the relevance of traditional gender roles and have their female protagonists meet them (with Němcová, even having the princess recognize the traditional grandmother as a 'happy woman').⁵² If the protagonists lack them, it is simply seen as a stepping-off tool to help them reach those expectations through non-fantasized means of the time.

In line with the Czech National Revival, both female authors utilize ethnological components to illustrate the role of women within the movement. This is most prominently done by Němcová where her character the grandmother not only praises Bohemia suggesting she would not raise her children elsewhere, but also by showing how the word of mouth - so often - participated by this female character make women key figures in the perservation of culture.

It is also worthy of note, that the texts despite coming from different literary influences

⁵² Božena Němcová, *Babička* (1855; repr., Česká Knížnice, Host, 2017), 86.

and times, utilize the ethnological components similarly. Put simply, both genders of authors depict women within the confines of their expectational roles of the time and provide insight into what the traits of said roles should be to accomplish the form of the ideal woman that matches regardless of the artistic influence. It is the simple matter-of-fact style of writing of the male authors that separates them from the female authors. The characters of women in the writing of Božena Němcová, and Eliška Krásnohorská are diversified and are given flaws without necessary retribution. The ethnological components chosen help demonstrate that. Even more simply, from the analysis, it can be derived that ethnological components in *Kytice* and *Máj* were used to illustrate the rights and wrongs of women whilst the ethnological components in *Babička* and *Svéhlavička* were used to depict women within the societal expectations of the time.

Conclusion

The question of ways in which men and women authors use ethnological components in their depictions of women in their writing from the 19th-century Czech National Revival may appear broad. But it is surprisingly narrow. The lives of women during the 19th-century despite the changing times and influences of new literary movements such as Romanticism and Biedermeier remained quite limited and simplistic, with women's lives - assigned by the gender roles limited by societal expectations - centered on the expectation to marry and become mothers. The exploration of the choices of ethnological elements made by female and male authors are slightly different albeit not due to the influences of the various artistic movements. As was illustrated within the analytical part of the thesis, both genders of authors explore the role of a woman in the familiar context and point towards the importance of women in it. The authors also use ethnological components in their writing to demonstrate what traits and virtues - within the assigned gender roles - women should possess and actively cultivate to make them the ideal representative of their gender. To directly illustrate those virtues, male authors - specifically Erben - utilize ethnological components with retribution following those who do not meet those demands. While Božena Němcová, and Eliška Krásnohorská also use those components to demonstrate the ideal woman, recognize the power in conventional gender roles, and even remark on the happiness of the female characters. The female characters are, however, more rounded. Their characters are given flaws without facing fatal retributions. The women authors also utilize ethnological components to showcase women as being more active in the Czech National Revival movement (especially in the works of Němcová, where women are seen as active carriers and preservers of history, customs, and tradition). Simply, whilst Karel Jaromír Erben and Karel Hynek Mácha used ethnological components to depict women within their gender roles and provide insight into the rights and wrongs of women in their time, Božena Němcová and Eliška Krásnohorská used ethnological components to depict women's lives and their contribution to society within the scope of constrained societal expectations.

Souhrn

Otázka, jakým způsobem autoři a autorky využívají etnologické složky při zobrazování žen ve svých textech z období Českého národního obrození 19. století, je téma co se může zdát široké. Je ale však překvapivě úzké. Zejména z důvodu že životy žen v 19. století navzdory ‘měnícím se dobám’ a vlivům nových uměleckých hnutí, zejména romantismus a *biedermeier*, zůstaly dosti omezené a zjednodušující. Životy žen – omezené genderovými rolemi spolu se společenskými očekáváními – se soustředily na role ženy a matky. Zkoumání výběru etnologických prvků, autorů a autorek, se mírně liší, i když ne kvůli vlivům různých uměleckých směrů. Jak bylo ukázáno v analytické části práce, obě pohlaví autorů zkoumají roli ženy ve tradičním, rodinném kontextu a poukazují na význam ženy v něm. Autoři ve svém psaní využívají také etnologická komponenta, aby poukázali, jaké vlastnosti a ctnosti – v rámci přidělených genderových rolí – by ženy měly mít a aktivně pěstovat, aby byly ideálními představitelkami svého pohlaví. Pro přímou ilustraci těchto ctností využívají mužští autoři Karel Jaromír Erben a Karel Hynek Mácha etnologické složky s potrestáním těch, kdo tyto požadavky nesplňují. Zatímco Božena Němcová a Eliška Krásnohorská tyto složky také používají k ilustraci ideální ženy, a poukazují na jisté síly v konvenčních genderových rolích, jejich ženské postavy jsou však všestranné a rozmanité. Postavy mají chyby, aniž by za ně čelily fatálním trestům. Autorky také využívají etnologické složky k tomu, aby představily ženy jako aktivnější v českém národním obrození (zejména v dílech Němcové, kde jsou ženy vnímány jako aktivní nositelky a ochránkyně historie, zvyků a tradic). Jednoduše, zatímco Karel Jaromír Erben a Karel Hynek Mácha pomocí etnologických komponentů vykreslili ženy v rámci genderových rolí a poukázali na ctnosti a hříchy žen, Božena Němcová a Eliška Krásnohorská pomocí etnologických složek vykreslily život žen a jejich přínos pro společnost v rámci omezených společenských očekávání.

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