

CHARLES UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Social Sciences
Institute of International Studies

THESIS ASSESSMENT
(Reviewer)

Student's name: Markéta SIXTOVÁ

Thesis title: 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?

Reviewer: Jiří Vykoukal

1. TOPIC AND OBJECTIVE (short information on the thesis, research objective):

Thesis aim is to analyze how selected Czech male and female writers in the 19th century „ethnologically“ viewed and interpreted female element in their writings. At the beginnings Markéta comes with the suggestion (p.3) that there was a difference between both genders and their view of women, and later illustrates how this suggestions works in the case of four selected writers (K. J. Erben, K. H. Mácha, B. Němcová, and E. Krásnohorská). The question is viewed through the prism of certain criteria applied on the most known works of the mentioned authors.

2. CONTENT (complexity, original approach, argument, structure, theoretical and methodological backing, work with sources, appropriateness of annexes, etc.):

My main objection aims at certain aspects of conceptualization of the topic. Beginning with the description of the national revival through setting up the criteria of the comparative framework to the choice of authors we do not know why the author selected just these elements for her work. It simply said „that's the way it is“.

National revival: there is a vast literature on the topic (just to mention e.g. Anderson, Gellner and Hroch) which could provide less descriptive and less traditional inspirations. The issue of „germanization“ is not so simple (Czech speaking elites disappeared and were replaced but foreign elites which did not have strong reasons to learn Czech); the issue of Re-Catholization is not just a matter of intolerance vis a fact that it was introduced along the same principle (cuius regio, eius religio) which confirmed dominating role of Protestantism in many other European states. Finally, why it was worth to revive the language if many authors today think that this has been responsible for construction of the Czech nation-building on ethno-linguistic, not civic nationalism (language as an instrument of social homogenization)?

The other point is that I miss more extensive comments on the gender issue as a part of the national revival, especially vis a vis the selection of authors who came from different periods. It has to be said that 19th century was definitely not a homogenous period and in Central Europe we have to take into account important milestones producing different atmosphere as well as condition of social life like 1848, constitutional reforms in 1860s, radicalization of Czech-German tensions or the birth of the social/ist issue. Mácha and Erben were born in the period of culminating Napoleonic wars, Němcová came a decade later (all died before 1900), but Krásnohorská was born 1847 and died 1926. How different times and development of women's question influenced different authors and their writings? If you write e. g. (p. 35) that „education for women is not to be found in the text of both male authors“, this is also because of the simple fact that education for girls came in 1860s, when both, Mácha and

Erben, were already dead, but it was not the case of Krásnohorská who earned the doctoral degree in 1922. Your text shows these things, but they should be better explained and integrated with the conceptualization of the topic. Last thing (to be mentioned) is the question why the comparative criteria were used in an uneven way – e.g. some criteria are missing in Mácha's case: does it mean, there are not to be identified in his works?

3. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE (quality of language, citation style, graphics, formal aspects, etc.):

Language is clear, there are some typos, but not frequently, citations are correct. List of sources should have been divided to primary and secondary sources.

4. STATEMENT ON THE ORIGINALITY OF THE THESIS:

Anti-plagiarism (Turnitin) shows no traces of plagiarism.

5. SHORT COMMENTS BY THE REVIEWER (overall impression, strengths and weaknesses, originality of ideas, achievement of the research objective etc.):

I appreciate the topic and its understanding as well some partial observations, but would be happier with more explanations, more systematic approach, and better historical contextualization.

6. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING THE DEFENCE:

- a) Why did you not include e.g. Karolína Světlá (instead of Eliška Krásnohorská)?
- b) Should your original hypothesis be confirmed or rejected?
- c) Did the works written by Němcová and Krásnohorská contribute to women's emancipation in Bohemia in the 19th century?

7. (NON-)RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE:

Thesis can be accepted for the purpose of defence, proposed grade: C

Date: 2nd September 2024

Signature:
Jiří Vykoukal