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**The Depiction of Gypsies and Its Relationship to “Our” Village in 19th-Century Czech Literature (abstract)**

The present study analyzes the “Gypsy” figures in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Czech literature as non-mimetic creations. A critique of the contrary approach, which sees “Gypsies” as distorted images of actual Romanies, is elaborated in chap. 1.3. The subsequent chapters focus on the concepts of “constructed strangeness”, marginality and the numinous (1.4); the diverse cultural layers which make up the Gypsy stereotype (1.5); and the semantics of this stereotype (1.6). This general theoretical overview is followed by interpretations of four literary texts (chap. 1.7–1.10) which represent the archaic (demonizing), the romantic and the modern (ironic) layers of the Gypsy image. The spy Zatrán, a character in Josef Linda’s historical drama *Jaroslav Šternberg v boji proti Tatarům*, can be seen as an example of a demonized Gypsy. Karel Hynek Mácha’s novel *Cikáni* and Adolf Heyduk’s lyrical sequence “Cigánské melodie” depict both the romantic desire to identify with the Gypsy and the impossibility to achieve it. Svatopluk Čech’s short story “Cikánka” presents an ironic deconstruction of the Gypsy stereotype. The second part of the study contains comprehensive contextual interpretations of Gypsy motifs in the prose works of three Czech ruralist authors (Vítězslav Hálek, Karolina Světlá and Josef Holeček). In these chapters, an in-depth analysis of the “Czech village”, as depicted by the given author, is followed by the close reading of a short story (Hálek: “Bajrama”, Světlá: “Cikánka”) or a passage (an episode in Book X of Holeček’s *Naši*) featuring Gypsy motifs. The notion of the *centre*, which is used as the interpretive tool in these chapters, allows uncovering fundamental semantic differences between the works of the three authors: Holeček portrays the idealized peasant as the stable centre of the world of *Naši*; in Hálek’s works, the centripetal, domesticating movement dominates, and Světlá’s works are characterized by various centrifugal forces.