

IMESS dissertation						
Name/code:	Sander Roberto Maurano Filho					
Dissertation title:	Producing and Consuming the Nation: Ethnography of a Czech National Memorial					
Scale: 5 - excellent, 4 - good, 3 - satisfactory, 2 - poor, 1 - very poor						
	5	4	3	2	1	
ARGUMENT:						
Clearly defined research question	x					No clearly defined research question
Answers research question	x					Does not answer research question
Well structured	x					Badly structured
Shows theoretical awareness	x					Shows no theoretical awareness
Conceptual clarity	x					Conceptual confusion
Empirically appropriate & robust		x				Full of empirical errors
Logical and coherent	x					Illogical and incoherent
Analytical	x					Descriptive
Critical	x					Uncritical
Shows independent thought	x					Does not show independent thought
SOURCES & USAGE:						
Evidence of reading/research	x					No evidence of reading/research
Effective use of sources/data	x					Ineffective use of sources/data
WRITING STYLE:						
Clear	x					Obscure
Good punctuation	x					Poor punctuation
Grammatically correct	x					Grammatically incorrect
PRESENTATION:						
Appropriate length	x					Too long/short
Good referencing		x				Poor/inconsistent referencing
Good spelling		x				Poor spelling
Good bibliography	x					Poor bibliography
Deducted for late submission:	Deducted for faulty referencing:				Mark*: 92/A	
UCL marker: Výborně	Signed: Ondřej Matějka				Date: June 14, 2012	

* Mark: A = 70+; B = 65-69; C = 60-64; D = 55-59; E = 50-54; F = fail, less than 50

Scheme of award (assessment criteria):

	Charles University**	IMESS
Excellent	Výborně [1]	A
Very Good	Velmi dobře [2]	B
Good	Velmi dobře [2.5]	C
Satisfactory	Dobře [3]	D
Sufficient	Dobře [3.5]	E
Fail	Neprospěl [4]	F

CONTINUES OVERLEAF

NOTE: Please provide substantive and detailed feedback

Comments (at least 300 words)

Based on outstanding orientation in the nationalism studies bibliography and a very good knowledge of current research agendas in this field, the author skilfully identified an adequate topic for a MA thesis: history, memory and all sorts of instrumentalizations and re-appropriations of one of the key Prague national monuments – the Vítkov memorial. With the help of already existing scholarship accessible in English (Wingfield, Paces etc.) he succinctly summarized the successive phases of the construction of the memorial from the end of the 19th century until nowadays with a special focus on the “fourth revival” of Vítkov in 2009. He attentively analyzed all visible symptoms of the (re)production of the Czech nation in and through the memorial. The most important point is that his interest in Vítkov was not saturated by the fine reconstruction of the (discursive) production side of the nation-generating process. With the help of ethnographic methodology (observant participation, unstructured interviews) he succeeded in overcoming one of the most frequent shortcomings of mainstream nationalism studies production i.e. avoiding or bypassing the reception, consumption, re-appropriations of discourses/messages conveyed by various *lieux de mémoire*. After several months of field work in Vítkov the author uncovered all sorts of consumers’ interactions with the memorial, interactions that (re)create the nation both at festive ritual state-directed occasions and (in author’s perspective mainly) in everyday practices. The observation of seniors’ and young families’ walks, of teenagers’ skating, flying kites led the author to the final interpretation which constitutes probably more of a stimulating hypothesis (to be examined by further research) on the (unconscious?) “process of essentialization” of abstract (and often imposed from the upper levels of the modern state administration) categories like nation through everyday interactions with memorial sites symbolizing or embodying these categories in the public space. It is a well-researched, theoretically and methodologically sound study, the only irritating element is the Czech abstract that needs a thorough language correction.

Specific questions for oral defence (at least 100 words)

Are there any specific signs of the presence of other Others in the construction of the Czech nation besides the communist past visible in the Vítkov NM (Germans for instance)?

Could you elaborate more on the precise (political) context of the 2009 fourth revival of Vítkov? Can you identify any specific political agenda of the government or the president in 2009 connected to the decision to invest public resources into the reconstruction of Vítkov?

When analyzing the ritual re-unveiling of the monument and re-burying of the unknown soldier did you notice any references (be it corrective or re-enactive) to the original rituals? Is the re-staging of the ritual in any way constructed on the background of the first performance?

How to explain the presence of Nejedlý (but also Kundera and Pithart) on the Columbarium list if your interpretative key is “no matter what they did, they contributed to the singularity of Czech nation, except communists” (p. 68)?