Abstract

This MA thesis discusses contemporary US literature in Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1956 in order to see how the US was represented through the chosen American writers and their works. The first two chapters look at how the parallel canon was established, both from historical and theoretical perspective. The third chapter discusses Langston Hughes as the representative of American poetry. It shows how Hughes was used to draw attention to racial inequality in the US. Howard Fast as the superstar of the “Czechoslovak America” is the focus of the fourth chapter. The cases of both Fast and Hughes show that contemporary US authors published in Czechoslovakia at that time were chosen for the way they depicted the US racial and social inequality and the repression of political opposition, and identified themselves as members of the so called progressive America. Reading Hughes and Fast from the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain contributes to Czech scholarship on the 1950s and adds new perspectives to the contemporary reconsiderations of American leftist writers.