

Abstract

The thesis focuses on buildings that represent a „Hindu shrine“ and a „Buddhist shrine“ built in Prague Zoo in 2013 and several statues of deities that are situated in their proximity. The conception of the thesis is based on anthropological approaches to material culture that examine the importance of a specific setting where an object is situated. In this case, it is a zoological garden. I approach the zoo as a cultural institution with emphasis on its arranged material space. The first, more general part of the thesis presents the principles of composing zoos that can be encountered in their spaces. I show that the Prague Zoo shrines are only one of many allusions to „other cultures“ or „traditional cultures“ that are situated in zoological gardens and that their institutional place is ambiguous, between an exhibited artefact, an authentic thing, and an inauthentic imitation, a part of a scene. For future exploration into the sources of the poetics of their adaptation, I suggest the concept of imaginaries, borrowed from the field of anthropology of tourism. The second part is based on my observations and interview with some of the makers of the shrines. I present the intentions behind the creation of the shrines and the diverse responses they induce in visitors.