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EDITORIAL – ALTERITY, ENMIFICATION, ORIENTALISM AND OTHER ISSUES

This issue of the DTK (2/21) journal may be framed by the longstanding research problem present in cultural history or historical anthropology, and that is the in/out group dichotomy, the problem of otherness and the distinctive status of the 'Other' in cultures and societies; in other words the problem of alterity. Alterity as an analytic category is prominently featured in several studies and in two remarkable discussion pieces representing an ongoing debate previously opened on the DTK pages.

The study by Davor Pavičić, titled *A Story Told Twice*, represents an insightful analysis of two 19th century travelogues written by members of the entourage of Austro-Hungarian Emperor Francis Joseph, who participated at the opening ceremony of the Suez Canal in 1869. Two Austro-Hungarian citizens reflected on a cultural world which was vastly different from their own, and produced texts replete with subjective insights into the 19th century Oriental world, drawing on two different discourses – the classic orientalist and imperial one in the case of Beda Dudík – and a specific 'people's view' in the case of Antonín Dudík. These outstanding travelogues have been analysed in a comparative perspective for the first time.

The subject of the study by Petr Andreas, with the title *It is still not clear what the anti-socialist forces are* is the cultural construction of the image of the enemy (the process of enmification). The text deals with the enemy discourse created within the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC) during the opening repressive phase of the so-called Normalization, which followed the 1968 invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies in Czechoslovakia. The reformists around the former KSC general secretary, Alexander Dubček, managed to significantly soften the traditional Marxist-Leninist enemy discourse, and the new leadership, which proverbially rolled in on Soviet tanks, decided that a profound rejuvenation was needed in this regard. Petr Andreas provided an incisive examination of the new

concept of 'anti-Sovietism' which proved to be the key symbolical discursive vehicle of the early Normalization period.

The concept of alterity is also paramount to the discussion text by Chinese scholar Zhang Zuocheng (*West vis-à-vis East. Tradition, Question and Practice in Chinese Historiography*) who decided to react to a polemical text by Pavel Himl, published in DTK 2/20 (*Where Does the West End? On Writing History, Catching Up and Self-Awareness*). Pavel Himl reflected on the issue of Czech historiography's difficult adaptation to new challenges after the profound political changes in late 1980s and early 1990s, to become 'comparable' or 'competitive' on the European stage as well as in the context of globalising tendencies in academia. Zhang Zuocheng has contributed to the discussion by suggesting that non-Western academic communities should not only be more 'self-confident' in the sense that Pavel Himl proposed, but that they should also feel sufficiently competent to engage in a meaningful 'equal dialogue' regarding epistemological perspectives of historiographic research.

The debate on alterity reaches a pinnacle in the text by Stanislav Kokoška which adds to the ongoing discussion regarding the hotly-contested issue of the late 1930s and early 1940s in the Czech lands, and that is the existence of penitentiary work camps designed for 'slackers' and for ethnic Roma (Gypsies) living on the territory of the so-called Czechoslovak IInd Republic, and subsequently the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (1939–1945). In their earlier discussion piece, Pavel Baloun and Jaroslav Mrňka suggested that these pre-Protectorate work camps were already designed on the basis of racist anti-Roma concepts. Stanislav Kokoška took up the challenge and argues that rather more general concepts of social disciplination were involved and that the 'Czech' camps did not represent direct precursors of the 'Final solution' orchestrated by Nazis during WWII.

Two remaining texts which comprise the DTK 2/21 do not assume alterity as their subject of interest but they also constitute valuable analytic pieces. *Discussing the 'Grandmother hypothesis'* by Jan Horský brings us to the interdisciplinary field of historical demography and cultural history. Horský deals with the central research problem of whether the 'grandmother effect' may be viewed as the cause of the menopause as an evolutionary adaptation. The last text of this DTK issue, a comparative theoretical study by Tomáš Malý, is devoted to the topic of the recent development in ritual theory research within the Czech and Polish academia, especially with regard to the medieval and early modern periods. Malý observes that the reception of contemporary anthropological concepts of rituals has been insufficient, and both Czech and Polish historians have tended to view

the problem rather through the lens of social history. Malý offers valuable suggestions on how to ameliorate the situation.

As usually, this DTK issue also contains several reviews of recently published monographs. Two texts, one by Jiří Hutečka and the other by Martin Jemelka, review recently released books which research the question of the strategies of coping with the war experience (in both cases the WWI in Czech and Slovak Lands). The rather 'warlike' character of the reviews is enhanced by the text by Matěj Bílý, critically assessing a recent monograph on the military use of Czech uranium deposits between 1900–1960. The atmosphere lightens up with Jan Horský, who examines a recent text and discusses various ways in which Czech anthropologists have been conceptualizing the Balkans, and finally with Luboš Studený, who reviews a text dealing with revolutionary promises of the 1968 movement in both Western and Central Europe.

In the year 2021, which can be safely labelled as the 'Year of Covid', DTK unfortunately did not avoid many hindrances and hardships suffered by academic communities. Sadly, the challenges of the Covid pandemic, which have severely affected Czech society, remain unresolved. Moreover, the situation worsened in February 2022 when Russian Federation launched an aggressive war against Ukraine. Czech academia has joined the efforts to welcome and assist several hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees and is using its resources to mitigate the impact of the full-scale war fought in our immediate vicinity. Despite all the challenges, which we have been facing in the recent past, we can promise that you will find two more full DTK issues in 2022, featuring a number of inspiring texts presenting innovative research.

Petr Wohlmutb, Editor-In-Chief