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**Our (Beautiful, Healthy, Modern and National) Body: Visual Representation of Physical Culture and Sports in the Context of National Identity Formation in the Interwar Czechoslovakia**

Abstract

This PhD thesis describes visual representation of partial aspects of physical culture and sports in interwar Czechoslovakia. The general phenomenon of social affiliation and national identification is critically observed in four central chapters, together with the usage of symbolic figures that are in periodical visual productions exposed as different body types. Aside the Sokol gymnastics club and its' attempt to formulate the national body, the central figure is the wrestler Gustav Frištenský who as the bearer of traditional concepts of health and beauty also represented the responsible modern citizenship. The dancer Milča Mayerová provides the framework for the exposure of dance culture as a characteristic phenomenon of the cultivation of the female body by movement, which enabled the body to mediate and visualise certain processes of modernity. The athlete Zdena Koubková completes the evocation of national bodies with a modern athletic figure of extreme abilities.

Hence, this PhD thesis by crossing two thematic axes - visual representation of the body and sports physicality in Czechoslovak interwar culture and the process of national affiliation – depicts the dynamics of this mutual relationship. The discourse analysis of periodic reflection on the phenomenon of physical culture expounds the promotion, popularization and political function of the image of the body as well as describes the body's exposition as a cultural construct and instrument of ideological formation.

Keywords:

Body, sport, physical culture, visual culture, film, visual representation, nation, nationalism, modernity, Sokol, Gustav Frištenský, Milča Mayerová, Zdena Koubková, dance, athletics, health, beauty, gymnastics movement