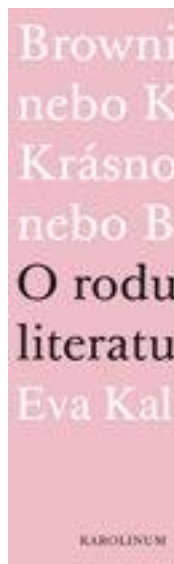

Pink suits gender. A new book looks at gender in the life of literature

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One of the latest offerings from the Karolinum publishing house is a book by the translation scholar PhDr. Eva Kalivodová, Ph.D., focusing on the phenomena and issues of translation and gender. The launch of her book “Browningová nebo Klášterský? Krásnohorská nebo Byron? O rodu v životě literatury” [E. Barret-Browning or Klášterský? Krásnohorská or Byron? On Gender in the Life of Literature] took place on May 24 in the cosy environment of the Sweets-Sporck Palace, home of the Institute of Translation Studies.

Eva Kalivodová’s work combines several of her long-term interests: namely the subject of Czech and English 19th century literature with overlaps into the 20th century; translation studies and gender studies. What makes the text almost an adventure is the interplay of the multilateral influences where the author finds unexpected connections, therefore coming up with a new reading of certain concepts, terms and arguments traditionally anchored in the discourse of (seemingly) separate disciplines.



“I never believed I would ever write a book,” PhDr. Eva Kalivodová, Ph.D., said at the start of the meeting and continued: “The idea terrified me for a long time. But then a number of very important sources of inspiration came together and kept me busy, eventually resulting in a book.” The first source of inspiration was the environment of her home Institute of Translation Studies where she focuses on the issues of translation. The second source of inspiration were her doctoral studies at the Institute of Czech Literature and Literary Studies of the Charles University Faculty of Arts where she has received great support for her effort to include translation and translated literature in the reflection of Czech culture as its integral part. She also found the institute receptive to new findings made possible by the use of gender analysis which plays an irreplaceable role in the book.

At the presentation of her book, Eva Kalivodová did not miss the opportunity to comment on its pink cover. “There appears to be a trend in the publishing business – publishers believe that pink suits gender. I came across the idea at Karolinum but there are indications that other publishers think along the same lines. But I calmed down the other day when I read a newspaper article saying that pink was not solely restricted to gender but actually had a positive effect on people.”

According to the director of the Institute of Translation Studies, PhDr. Mgr. Stanislav Rubáš, Ph.D., the book does not lack in critical and analytic spirit. “For me personally, the book has raised two topics. The first one being that translation as a method of studying literature is still underused and underappreciated despite the fact that this method has proved very productive. Because compared to ordinary reading, translation sheds a different, often interesting light on certain hues of meaning. And the second message being that in order to achieve something one needs to – like Eliška Krásnohorská featured in the book – overcome provincial narrow-mindedness and open up to the world.”

As part of the book presentation, the author gave a lecture on the issue of translation and gender which was followed by a discussion.