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**Terézia Vansová in the literary context of Slavonic studies : (questions of aesthetics and axiology) : summary**

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# SUMMARY

## **Terézia Vansová in the Literary Context of Slavonic Studies (Questions of Aesthetics and Axiology)**

The literary research of the personality of Terézia Vansová and her literary, publishing and enlightenment activities provides a fascinating image or more likely series of images of woman dedicated to, at least in a little, contribute to well-being of many, a woman with the deeply anchored values, she did not only defined for herself, but she also followed within her entire life; a woman very often alone and lonely, standing out of the literary, ideological and political mainstream, living her life on the geographical and social periphery of the contemporary Slovak public life; a female representant of the Slovak intelligentsia, however living in a close contact with the Slovak common people. This all captured on the background of crucial historic event and milestones determining the development of Slovak society in different ways, causing subsequent periods of social excitement and disillusion. The female element is not emphasized autotelicly. Terézia Vansová by her patient, persistent small-scale work opened the path, no matter how narrow, to the general acceptance of female intellectual cultural contribution within the Slovak society. Vansová was not a revolutionary, she admitted that the primary role of a woman consists in a motherhood and parenting (despite she was not able to achieve this goal and fulfillment and tried to compensate this “failure” by her public activities), however, her work indicated the erosion of traditional male cultural hegemony in the Slovak society, the trend soon legitimized by the incoming strong generation of Slovak female authors. The ideological program of Vansová predetermining her activities was extraordinary – Vansová worked on the changes from the bottom up, intuitively and without the political ambitions rather

than with certain political or cultural programs. Her efforts are led by simple, but timeless values, Vansová did not have any guarantees of success, nevertheless, she worked with the enthusiasm and the belief about the meaningfulness of her activities. Vansová could be characterized as a pioneer, enthusiastic author and at the same time a woman with a strong and stable moral codex. These characteristics are even more admirable considering the Vansová's tough personal life full of painful losses and economic hardship.

The results of the literary research of the literary production of Terézia Vansová as presented herein substantially reflect the personality of the author the characteristic of which we have provided above. It is apparent that the author fully considered the functional element of the literary communication on a line author-work-reader, therefore considering the literature as a means of the mass communication, the medium allowing transfer to the reader an information, which literary incorporation, processing, and final effect is in one hand determined by the author itself, however, on the other hand, the mere fact of the initialization of the communication link is conditioned by the attractiveness of the work for the reader. Vansová's view on the literature was on the one side pragmatic and utilitarian, on the other side she was fully aware that the thematic attractiveness, compositional comprehensibility and esthetical impressiveness of a literary work for the target readership are mandatory preconditions for the effective fulfillment of its communication function. Vansová perceived the literary taste of her potential reader, adapt her literary efforts and used instruments to it – she popularized her production, while she also suitably incorporated, communicated and propagated the axiological context compatible with her values. Per analogy we could talk about Vansová's bottom-up literary process, starting from a reader with a suppressed author subject in favor of preserving the communication momentum of a literary work. Terézia Vansová was educated and informed enough to be aware of the contemporary literary norms and canons, but under her literary method, she chose a more flexible approach and specific way of their reflection and realization, what caused that her works often “defy” their literary qualification (historical, genological, esthetical). After all, her works are created in the intersection of the then-currently unique literary communication link between female author, Christian, Slovak patriot on the one side, and the female reader of a middle or lower social class on the other – the target readership Vansová intentionally aimed to.

Literary research presented herein is meant to demonstrate these general assumptions. On the limited sample of the Vansová's literary works selected based on their genological categorization (travelogues, novels, memoirs) we illustrate the creative and functionally conditioned approach of Vansová to the general genological characteristics of the respective genres, resulting in the genological hybridization, genological deviation or an introduction of genre subtypes previously unknown or unrealized in Slovak literature. Under the imperative of the

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reader attractivity, Vansová did not hesitate to cross the boundaries of generally accepted esthetical norms of a theory of genres and, regardless of the final assessment of her ability to poetologically and compositionally handle her author ambitions, we cannot question her invention and enrichment of the genological diversity of Slovak literature. Vansová not only wrote the first novel for women in the Slovak literature (*Sirota Podhradských*) but also creatively beletrized the travelogue (*Pani Georgiadesová na cestách*), introduced to the Slovak literature the elements of the gothic novel – horror (*Kliatba*) and created within several works (with Ján Vansa in the center) unique memoir mosaic – the contextual memoir.

While the genological scope of Vansová’s production reflecting the readers’ taste or literary fashion is undoubtedly very broad and variable, Vansová stayed significantly coherent with regard to the axiological messages of her works mostly regardless of their genological characteristics or the time of their creation. And the axiological aspect of the Vansová’s works may be deemed being the reflection of her personality, her legacy for her readers. Vansová led her readers towards and persuaded them about the importance of patriotism, family, Christian love, faith in God and his laws, education (especially of women) and the key role of women in society. As we demonstrate in this dissertation, she managed to do so in her novels, travelogues as well as in her memoirs, employing always the appropriate, genre-specific literary means, proving her advanced literary competence.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Vansová’s position as an author is in the Slovak literary historiography marginalized (also due to the lack of the esthetical timelessness of her production) as unimportant or even as of a lower quality, when rather her publishing and enlightenment activities are emphasized (despite she indeed achieved the indisputable successes in this fields too). This attitude is in sharp contrast with a contemporary perception of Vansová’s works in the Slavic context. Based on the primary archival sources we reveal surprisingly numerous and rich contacts of Vansová’s literary works with foreign Slavic literatures showing the favorable admission of Vansová’s literary production even in the international context.

Terézia Vansová and her literary production is fascinating subject-matter of literary research and this dissertation in a limited scope given for the qualification works of this type draw attention to selected aspects of Vansová’s literary works, that have not been fully opened by the Slovak literary science yet. The freedom of research entails, however, the commitment of a researcher to approach the subject-matter of its research with the greatest care, bearing in the mind, that the results may become the grounds for future researches. We truly believe that this dissertation will stand these tests and eventually offer its reader the erudite and “comfortable” entry to Terézia Vansová as the extraordinary author in the Slovak literature.