

POSUDEK DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

KATEDRA ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA A LITERATURY PedF UK

Autor práce: Illia Lychman

Název práce: The reflection of war and notion of duty and dignity in A.L.Tennyson's 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' in comparison with selected poems of the First World War

Vedoucí práce: Doc. PhDr. Petr Chalupský, Ph.D

Rozsah práce: 74 stran bez příloh

Posudek: Oponent práce

Autor posudku: Bernadette E. Higgins MA

Posuzovaná oblast	Zvažovaná kritéria	Zvažovaná kritéria a Body (0-5)
1. Odborný kontext	Orientace v pojednávané problematice, odborné zázemí a širší přehled o disciplíně, znalost a uplatnění odborné terminologie, reprezentativnost a aktuálnost použité odborné literatury, variabilita odborných zdrojů a schopnost jejich syntézy	1
2. Výzkum	Stanovení a splnění cílů, formulace hypotéz, vhodnost a relevance metod a zvolených postupů, jasnost formulace a interpretace závěrů práce	2
3. Struktura a forma	Přehlednost struktury, členění, řazení a proporčnost kapitol a oddílů, návaznost a provázanost textu, konzistentnost úpravy práce, odpovídající rozsah práce, poznámkový aparát, adekvátnost a provedení příloh, odpovídající úroveň citační praxe	0
4. Jazyková úroveň	Celková úroveň jazykového projevu, přesnost, rozmanitost a čtivost formulací, absence gramatických, lexikálních a pravopisných nedostatků, úroveň odborného stylu	2
5. Věcná správnost a přesvědčivost	Hloubka a kvalita provedených analýz, faktická, věcná a obsahová správnost, podloženost, aktuálnost přístupů, schopnost argumentace a kritického myšlení, schopnost náležitě formulovat a interpretovat zjištění	1
6. Originalita	Přínos práce, samostatnost zpracování, původnost myšlenek, kreativita a zaujetí danou problematikou, možnosti dalšího rozvíjení, celková náročnost a pracnost, potenciál práce (navázání na výzkum či aplikace jeho výstupů v praxi)	2

Celkové zhodnocení práce (včetně kritických výhrad):

This thesis deals with a very interesting topic - British war poetry and its development from the time of the Crimean War and Tennyson's famous work, 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', to the period of the 'Great War' of 1914-1918 and poems written by Laurence Binyon and three poets who saw combat,

Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. The so-called 'War Poets' became cultural icons in the second half of the twentieth century (specifically, in the 1960s, when a number of factors raised poets such as Owen from relative obscurity to iconic status) and the topic is a rich and fascinating one, which the author of the thesis clearly finds inspiring. In the theoretical section, the author offers an overview of Victorian, Edwardian and Modernist poetry, describes the historical and social contexts and contemporary criticism of the poems he selected for analysis. The practical part then provides literary analyses of the poems and individual comparisons of all the First World War poems with Tennyson's poem.

That the topic is such a huge and ambitious one is perhaps one of the reasons why there are problems with the focus of the work and its theoretical framework. The title of the thesis states that the focus will be 'The reflection of war and notion of duty and dignity' in the two periods, but duty and dignity are referred to only very sparingly (in the thesis dignity is mentioned only 3 times and duty 5 times, two of these mentions referring to soldiers being 'on duty'). Instead, in the theoretical part, overviews of Victorian, Edwardian and Modernist poetry are given, which are not only unnecessary and unrelated to the topic, but also contain many contradictions, oversimplifications and inaccuracies, e.g. the description of Robert Browning's 'Sordello' as his best-known work and the claim ("Despite his failure with long poems, the poet was successful at writing simple and short poems like "Among the Rocks" (p. 9)) that his longer works were not successful (his 12-book narrative *The Ring and the Book* is arguably his greatest work and gained a huge amount of popularity). These overviews, with their short and too simplified descriptions of poets – Matthew Arnold, Elizabeth Barrett Browning etc., add nothing at all to the argument of the thesis and do not contribute to any theoretical framework, mainly because the author does not relate the overviews in any way to the topic of war. For example, the author mentions Thomas Hardy thus, "Such themes as contrariness of fate, led-downs in love and life, antivivisectionism, and war criticism were also common in his poems" (p.11) without mentioning anything further about Hardy's war poetry, which was significant and influential, or his complex and nuanced response to war, and on p.11. he writes "Some of the poet's literary works like the poetic drama *The Dynasts* (1904-1908) were written in blank verse." without mentioning that the drama is about the Napoleonic Wars. Likewise, Housman is described without any mention of the fact that he is often considered to be a war poet of sorts. It is mentioned that Edward Thomas "is considered to be a war poet" (p. 15) but no further explanation is given for this. More irrelevance comes with the rather extensive information about the writing of 'The Wasteland' which contains no analysis of the impact of the war on it, which is only very briefly mentioned.

In a passage on p. 9, the author writes that – "The poets who continued Tennyson's legacy were Rudyard Kipling, Thomas Hardy, and Algernon Swinburne, all of whom depicted the events of the Boer War. English war poetry achieved its climax only in the 1910s responding to the First World War." This is the only mention of the Boer War in the thesis, although a large amount of poetry was inspired by the 1899 – 1902 conflict and the author's claim (p. 19) that the 19th century only had two major wars, the Napoleonic and Crimean, is very contentious as lives lost in combat during the (Second) Boer war exceeded those in the conflict in Crimea. More importantly, saying more about two authors who straddled the 19th and 20th centuries, Kipling and Hardy, (Kipling in particular only gets a few passing references) would have made sense in terms of providing a meaningful historical overview and a more nuanced interpretation of the evolution of poetry about war. Without a more coherent theoretical underpinning, the author tends towards a too simple juxtaposition of Tennyson's glorification of the heroic failure of the Light Brigade and the soldier poets who countered glorification of war with their grim experience of the trenches, reaching a kind of 'climax' as the author puts it, of truth. This tends to lead to an exaggeration of the impact of the poetry of the critical 'War Poets', as they would later become known, Owen in particular, e.g. p. 69 "The public attitude towards the Great War started changing after the publication of "Dulce et Decorum est". This work opened the people's eyes to the true horrors of war as nobody knew that gases were massively used on the battlefields, for everybody still believed that soldiers were simply shooting each other." The poem, like the vast majority of Owen's

work, was published only posthumously in 1920, when people were no longer so interested in reading about the war, and it did not have the impact claimed by the author until later in the century, although of course, the early bullishness and optimism about the war diminished as the war progressed and the numbers of the slaughtered rose.

The practical part of the thesis is also problematic, both in structure and execution. The author states (p. 69) "The practical part focused on the evolution of a war poem from the nineteenth to the twentieth century" but he does not really do this. Instead, Tennyson's poem is compared to the five First World War poems in a format that is more repetitive than illuminating and with little reference to sources. Maybe because of haste, there are also a number of avoidable errors, e.g. referring to 'A. L.' Tennyson, referring to one of the six poems analysed wrongly (the heading of section 3.5. 'They' and 'Suicide in Trenches'), misquoting the famous dedication of 'The Wasteland' 'ig [sic]miglior fabbro', referring to works as 'canons' rather than canonical works etc.

There are positive aspects to the work, in particular the clear enthusiasm of the author for the topic, shown, for example, in the section relating to the Crimean war, and evidence of great endeavour and application in attempting to deal with such wide-ranging material. But a very serious and overriding problem with the work relates to the author's citation of sources, which is simply not sufficiently rigorous and transparent. There are many pages where no references are given at all or sources are not clearly acknowledged (e.g. in the literature overview pp 7 – 9, the poem analyses on pp 31 -2 or 38 – 9 and many more). Footnotes (e.g. on p. 14) are used to supply information but not its source. This is a very serious omission and is the reason for not recommending this work for acceptance until this aspect in particular is rectified.

Témata a náměty k diskusi při obhajobě:

Práci tímto: nedoporučuji

Datum: 11.09.2020

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Podpis:

1. Bodové hodnocení na škále 1-5 (5 bodů maximum), 0 bodů z jedné či více posuzovaných oblastí automaticky znamená, že práce není doporučena k obhajobě. vedoucího práce oponenta
2. Výsledná známka zahrnuje hodnocení posudku vedoucího práce, hodnocení posudku oponenta a hodnocení výkonu studenta v průběhu obhajoby. doporučuji nedoporučuji k obhajobě