

Alena Brabencová's B.A. thesis – review written by the opponent

Ms. Brabencová's B.A. work, **A Thesis Against Individualism: Interaction with the Other in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America***, is an extremely intelligent study relying on the concept of the other. The actual analysis is neatly structured with the focus shifting from the interpersonal interactions through metaphysical interactions to metatheatrical interactions; in other words, from the more obvious material to some truly original remarks. Thus, Ms. Brabencová is able to add new, sophisticated layers to her main argument, building up the tension and deepening her insight. Having said that, even though her logic and main line of thought are crystal-clear, her paragraphs are sometimes way too long; and even though it did not matter that much in this particular case, it might in the future, and thus, I would want Ms. Brabencová to be more careful in this respect.

For the purposes of the oral examination of her thesis, I truly have no major critical reservations or comments. Therefore, I would at least wish to ask two rather general questions, and expect brief, but very much to the point answers.

On several occasions, Ms. Brabencová rightly mentions that the play is rather against some of the values that are believed to be American: such as self-reliance, individualism, etc. Given the fact that there is, among other things, the character of the rabbi, and quite a few elements of Jewish mysticism incorporated in the body of the drama (and yes, Emmanuel Levinas was a distinctly Jewish philosopher), would she be able to say that *Angels in America* is, considering what we may vaguely call the Jewish dimension, more Jewish than American, or would that be, in her opinion, going too far?

The second question, then, has to do with her conclusion, and I believe is much more relevant. While I certainly agree with all that Ms. Brabencová has to point out as to post-nuclear families, so-called alternative communities and even nations, and yes, the need for all of that is clearly there, I would have expected a more scholarly concluding passage. Thus, where would she see the possibilities for further academic research in this area (are there for example any other Kushner's plays that may be interpreted in a similar fashion, or any other contemporary playwrights trying to accomplish similar things in their works?), and how would she evaluate her own current contribution?

This being the case, I am suggesting the following grade(s): either výborně/excellent, or very good/velmi dobře. As always, the final result will depend on the review written by the supervisor, as well as on the student's performance during the oral examination of her thesis.

Prague, Aug 17, 2021

Dr. Hana Ulmanová