



FACULTY OF ARTS  
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY  
IN PRAGUE



---

Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

**Opponent's Review**

Anna Kudrnová, "Movement and Stagnation in Samuel Beckett's Work," BA thesis

**Choice of Topic:**

The topic area selected for the thesis is certainly an issue at the centre of all Beckett's work. It is also a challenging one since it has been the subject of extensive critical interest for a considerable period.

**Thesis statement / aims and objectives:**

The aims of the work are stated with relative clarity, although what is lacking is any sense of a guiding argument. The thesis as a result is primarily descriptive. In the opening chapter Ms Kudrnová necessarily labours to limit the scope of the project to two works: *First Love* and *All That Fall*. She acknowledges the difficulty involved in her selection of these works (and, it must be noted, makes a good effort to refer to other works along the way), however ultimately the choice appears little more than arbitrary.

**Structure and development:**

A concerted attempt has been made to stabilise the field of inquiry by the inclusion of a theoretically orientated chapter concerning failure, communication and expression. The key theorists cited, Roman Jakobson and Keir Elam, are used to some effect, but some acknowledgement of the disjunction between their areas of specialisation is needed. Given the amount of scholarship on these issues, and the gesture to deliver some theory, the result is insufficient. The structure of the work is logical, although there is a minor imbalance between the chapter devoted to *First Love* and that on *All That Fall* in terms of length and detail. Positively, specific analyses of these texts are often quite perceptive.

**Research:**

The work demonstrates adequate skill in searching for, selecting, and evaluating sources. In general, the sources selected are clustered in a familiar fashion around very well known materials in Beckett studies dating up to the mid-1990s.

**Use of sources:**

Overall there is a good integration of multiple viewpoints and comparison of ideas or perspectives. Some ideas are investigated and integrated, but in a partial way, while little sense of the differences among critical viewpoints emerges. The use of secondary sources is nevertheless generally clear and stylistically well framed.

**Stylistics and language:**


There are some minor language errors, for instance the confusion of the words motive and motif. Expression is slightly awkward at points.

**Format:**

Some sub-headings might have been used to promote a sense of structure and organisation (see faculty and departmental guidelines). The format of footnotes and bibliography is excellent.

I recommend the thesis for defence and propose to grade the work "very good" / 2.

8.9.2009

  
Clare Wallace, PhD