

Supervisor's Report

Lenka Pichrtová, "Contemporary Culture Versus Irishness in [the] Plays of Martin McDonagh" (BA Thesis)

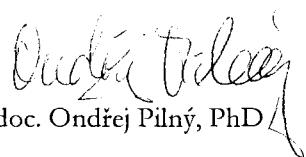
Lenka Pichrtová's thesis attempts to present a comprehensive survey of the dramatic oeuvre of Martin McDonagh in the context of Irish drama on the one hand, and of globalized culture on the other. It is based on meticulous research which spans the great majority of existing secondary sources related to the playwright. These sources are used largely in a judicious manner.

The thesis asks seminal questions pertaining to the topic, and features a number of original insights. Particularly the section dedicated to soap operas is among the highlights of Ms Pichrtová's work. However, the structure of the overall argument comes across as somewhat loose and digressive (on a rare occasion, the argument lacks coherence altogether, as in the introduction to Chapter 3 and in Section 3.2.2). The argument is moreover marred by frequent inaccuracy of expression, be it linguistic, stylistic, or factual: on p. 7 alone, the term "English citizen" occurs, a mention is made of "deviated experience" (?), and "monogram" is used for "monograph" (while a more appropriate term for Synge's *The Aran Islands* would be "literary diary" or simply "prose text"). The subsequent reference to "pieces" of literature (p. 10) is also hardly adequate in an academic essay, etc. What is more worrying are several substantial terminological flaws: the term "Irishness" seems to be erroneously used as a synonym for "the reality of Ireland" (p. 13-14), and also for "the Irish tradition" (in the Czech translation of the title of the thesis). Similarly, the term "Anglo-Irish dialect" (p. 22, 23) is misleading, while the entire section dedicated to Irish English (3.2.1) features frequent errors and simplifications (such as the claim that Synge's linguistic source was a "country dialect", rather than several dialects of two different languages).

An issue that may need further elucidation as part of the thesis defence is Ms Pichrtová's claim that McDonagh's work "push[es] Irish drama forward" (p. 48). In what sense exactly, and what does progress mean in terms of a dramatic tradition?

Despite the flaws outlined above, the ambitious nature of the project and the amount of research alone are to be appreciated, together with the identification of all seminal issues raised by the work of the controversial playwright. Therefore, I recommend the thesis for defence and propose to grade it as "very good".

Prague, 31 September 2010



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