

Posudek vedoucí

na bakalářskou práci Anny Koucké „Rose Tremain: Historical Novels“

In her revised study of Rose Tremain, Anna Koucká has decided to focus her attention on the two novels that are most frequently singled out for attention, *Restoration* and *Music and Silence*. Rose Tremain was one of the most promising young writers of the 1980s and she has enjoyed a somewhat eccentric career – both labeled as a rather romantic writer (whose persistent topic is love, who writes thrillers set in Paris etc.) and a critically highly acclaimed novelist (her two historical novels reaching for the highest awards: *Restoration* shortlisted for the Booker, *Music and Silence* receiving the Whitbread Prize). Anna Koucká in her thesis attempts to see connections between the two above mentioned novels (despite their different settings, the selected novels are persuasively presented as displaying thematic similarities and stressing similar types of characters). The first part of the thesis discusses the novels in terms of postmodern concepts of historiographic metafiction, while the second part focuses on the common theme of madness and obsession, which Koucká sees as yet another postmodern, intertextual aspect harking back to versions of psychological Gothicism.

The level of formulation, style, expression, are all adequate. The thesis is easy to follow, logically very well structured, and considering the amount of at first glance unwieldy and lengthy novelistic material, works very well in the devised system for analysis. Indeed, I appreciate the degree of independent scholarship, the ability to structure and draw analogies and parallels between texts. Nevertheless, such a rigorous framework resulted in some lamentable omissions and oversimplifications, e.g. the relationship of Peter Claire and Emilia presented as a “romantic” and “naïve” fairy tale, Christian’s obsession with his guardian angel and numerous other minor motifs which are indeed sacrificed entirely.

The thesis grows out of a relatively informed reading of such concepts as realism versus postmodern historiography etc., which provide the obvious theoretical and methodological underpinning. Nevertheless, the meaning of Tremain’s postmodern textual game is surely not only to inform about the constructedness of all realities, the fictitiousness of history. Does Tremain not imply something about mankind and history, the role of man and woman in history? What, if there is any, is the message directed at us? Also, apart from naming the fact of unreliable narrator and multiple narrators, in the respective novels, Anna Koucká does not particularly show how the difference of perspectives works through language, choice of word or imagery. Formal elements are mentioned in a general and rather offhand way. Such a major aspect of the topic, as characterization indeed is for this thesis, ought to notice the level of self-awareness and/or self-presentation, possible irony, split identities etc.

To conclude, I find the thesis in keeping with the required B.A. standards and, therefore, recommend it for defence. The preliminary mark is very good to good (**velmi dobře až dobře**). The final result will depend on the defence.

V Praze dne 20.6.2012

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Vedoucí práce