



Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur

OPPONENT'S REPORT

B.A. THESIS

The Function of Seymour Glass in the Conceptual and Textual Persona and Fictional Output of J.D. Salinger

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This readable thesis demonstrates an exceptional dedication to Seymour Glass. In the first section, his life story is “reconstructed” from the number of Saroyan’s texts in which the character appears; in the second section, Glass is analyzed with the objective of explaining why he committed suicide. Finally, at the end of the thesis, connections are drawn between Glass and Saroyan himself.

The candidate’s attitude to literature is creative and there is value in the portrait of Seymour Glass that she pieced together. The analytical part, however, could have been more extensive. Why compile a fictional character’s biography and suggest the reasons for his committing suicide without, afterwards, systematically discussing the consequences of these discoveries? For example, what preoccupations of the post-war era does the character represent or oppose (besides war ideology, which the candidate does mention)? Does he, or whatever he stands for, indeed appear insane—or is his milieu portrayed as at least equally absurd? Why? What biases does Salinger manifest here? Besides the work of the Lost Generation, what other texts are Salinger’s stories possibly in dialogue with? (Regarding this issue, I would refrain from seeing the post-WWII generation as the second wave of the Lost Generation. Perhaps the two generations did share the feeling of futility and frustration, as the thesis argues, but did not WWII—with the Holocaust and the Bomb among other things—give rise to a different level of horror and disillusionment?)

The prose is clear, with minor problems, such as a persistent comma before “that” (pp. 17, 31, 34, etc.). The bibliography could have been more thorough and, (not merely) when it comes to quoting Wordsworth, I would recommend the library rather than *Wisdom on Demand* at www.iwise.com (p. 34).

I propose the grade **very good** (velmi dobře).

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