

Abstract

The aim of the thesis is to analyse the experimental construction of dramas by contemporary Danish playwright Astrid Saalbach as well as the fantastic and symbols in her plays. The theoretical-methodological introduction defines the literary term of symbol, allegory and sign with a brief introduction of the psychoanalytic reading of symbols. The second part of the theoretical opening introduces the term of the fantastic and also Tzvetan Todorov's structural approach to this literary genre. The distinctions between different readings such as the poetry and the allegory, which both abolish the fantastic, are also pointed out in the introduction. The following definitions of literary genres of the uncanny and the marvellous focus on the narrow boundaries between these two genres and the fantastic, which is placed in between the marvellous and the uncanny. Furthermore, the introduction part also focuses on the genres of fantasy and science fiction, as they often mix or coincide with the fantastic in the literature of the 20th century. A shorter chapter also describes the term of Sigmund Freud's the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*), because it might be closer to the pure fantastic than to Thodorov's concept of the uncanny.

The analysis of dramas focuses primarily on the construction, the fantastic and the symbols, while more detailed examination of the plays is purposely left out. A thorough analysis pursues the chapter about *End of the World*, which is considered to be the best of Saalbach's plays. This part concentrates on the interpretation of the categories of *place, time, and feeling of home*, which are ceaselessly discussed in the play. The interpretation is followed by an interesting Czech staging of *End of the World* (*Verdens ende*) under a changed name *Transit*, where Saalbach herself suggested some substantial changes in the text. This shorter analysis uses Dan Ringgaard's study *Sense of the Places* (*Stedssans*) as a theoretical background. The final part of the thesis summarizes the reception of Saalbach's dramas in the Czech Republic from the point of view of the critics perceiving the fantastic and the symbolic layers in her plays.

None of Saalbach's dramas is written in one genre. Her plays are genre hybrids, which circumscribe a circle from almost realistic plays¹, over the first experiments with the drama's construction in a form of montage as well as broadening the classic construction², to nearly pure fantastic plays built on dream principals³, whence she returns to realism, even though she still keeps some symbols and elements of the fantastic⁴.

¹ *Spor i sandet* (1981), *Skyggernes børn* (1983), *Den usynlige by* (1986), *Dansetimen* (1986)

² *Morgen og aften* (1993), *Det velsignede barn* (1995), *Aske til aske, støv til støv* (1998)

³ *Det kolde hjerte* (2002), *Verdens ende* (2003)

⁴ *Pietà og Rødt og grønt* (2010)