

**Posudek vedoucí  
na bakalářskou práci Petry Poncarové „The Satanic Verses: In Quest of Identities“**

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The BA thesis deals with the various “negotiations of identity” (p.2) in terms of individuals and groups, but also in relation to narrative forms. These negotiations are perceived as connected to a range of spaces (we are promised cultural, linguistic and novelistic types). The underlying assumptions (such as identity in relation to space, novel as dialogical space and the diasporic space of movement) are theoretically underpinned, valid and sound.

Overall, the thesis displays a very high degree of orientation in the historical and cultural situation of immigration. Both the primary texts and the secondary sources (theoretical approaches to the diaspora) are selected well. With its range of questions and approaches, the thesis has proved to be is very inspiring and it indeed shows promise for future work on the MA level. Moreover, it must be stated that the thesis and locating its topic is a result of independent interest and further individual study and research (as there are no seminars on postcolonial theory available on the BA level).

Form the outset, the strategy of Petra Poncarová is to ask a series of questions, most of which do get their answers in the text of the thesis. This strategy is a useful one, though, as it points to the mysterious, mind-boggling nature of the discussed novel, its playfulness, even downright contradictoriness.

One reservation, though – although the relation between form and content is stressed as crucial for the meaning of all Rushdie’s novels, the role of the novel’s dialogical form eventually disappears from close scrutiny. Especially in relation to the position of the narrator, narrative perspective and irony, which may indeed be lamented. How can we trust the narrator? Also, though some mention is made of this in relation to names, the linguistic and generic fireworks of Rushdie’s iconoclastic, innovative style have not received much notice (linguistic hybridity as a sign of cultural hybridity of identity?).

Throughout the thesis we come to trace the transformation of identities (focus is especially on Saladin’s early mimicking adoption of Englishness, Gibrieel’s multicultural flair, which both suffer a shock as they become immigrants (and come to be labeled with superimposed identities).

The most valuable aspect of the thesis is the constant interconnection between Rushdie’s text and several texts of postcolonial theory (Bhabha, Brah, essays but Rushdie). Although, especially in the passages about space, some other theorists may have been utilized (G.Bachelard, Daniela Hodrová), the context of diasporic movement justifies a certain limitation of sources.

Does Poncarová understand the novel to promote a belief in an inner essence of identity? Her reading of the structure of the novel as that of a return, a finding of an original self (Saladin’s untranslated name) may imply this. Would that be a contradiction to what Rushdie seems to be saying about the migrant’s range of possibilities at creating new scenarios of self-understanding (as in *Imaginary Homelands*, a text which, though, remains race and ethnicity blind). Also, can we elaborate more on why Gibreel’s attempt fails?

The questions above are not meant to indicate an insufficiency in argumentation, rather the contrary - the thesis is thought provoking and very well presented. It more that fulfils all requirements for a thesis on this level of study. I therefore sincerely recommend it for defence with the preliminary grade of excellent (**v ýborn ě**).

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