

ÚTERÝ, 3. ZÁŘÍ 2013

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA – FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA

ÚSTAV ANGLOFONNÍCH LITERATUR A KULTUR

Report on Bakalářské Práce(Oponentsky posudek):
Fascinating Spectacles:Class as Traditional Obsession in Britain

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: PhDr. Soňa Nováková, CSc..

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Zpracoval : Katerina Hendrychova

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General Remarks:

Downton is an unfinished phenomenon and therefore is not a cultural text that can be comfortably extrapolated to determine its final thesis. The series continues in the Fall of this year and therefore any comments contained herein are relevant only to the first 3 series and risk contradiction.

There is limited analysis of the *theme park* nature of the program in relation to its target audience- it requires consideration of the phenomenon of heritage cinema and I note the obvious

omission of essays specifically of this issue e.g. *Heritage Cinema* contained within Morley and Robbins' *British Cultural Studies*.

The issue of any real conclusion as to views on whether the British class system is being valorized or simply nostalgically reenacted or indeed updated or critiqued are not adequately made clear in this thesis which is a real shame as that seems to be the central issue at stake.

What would have been particularly useful would be a consideration of the genre of heritage texts and a general consideration of the marketing constraints imposed on this literature- there is no real analysis of whether *Downton* represents a form of parody, pastiche or indeed simple homage. In this regard the thesis paper remains oddly unengaged and uncritical.

The student asserts that there is an essential *conservatism* at work in the series but the fails to explain the nature of this conservatism (with a Capital or small c, active or passive, political or social, philosophical or political-economic)

In part this sort of nostalgic poetics is concerned with the Anglo sphere more generally and the perplexing lack of etiquette in the dominant cultural representative of this in the USA (note the representation of americans as being essentially brutal, ill-mannered and gauche both in this and in *gosford park*)

Overall, this is actually an interesting thesis which raises a number of stimulus questions. The fact that many of them are not adequately addressed is something of a let-down.

Recommendation

I find this thesis to be of substantial merit and recommend it for a pass at a grade of Very Good(2) to Excellent(1).

Colin S Clark MA