

Posudek vedoucí na diplomovou práci Evy Bilské “Shakespearean Villains“

The submitted dissertation is a valuable analysis of contemporary debates which deal with the topic of evil characters in plays by William Shakespeare. Focusing on the dramatic type of villain (in semantic contrast to knave or rogue etc.) Eva Bilská selected for particular scrutiny the figures of Richard III, Iago, Shylock, Caliban, Edmund, Angelo and Macbeth.

I believe that she has managed to articulate her position and particular thesis logically and clearly. The definition of the dramatic type of Shakespearean villain and her selection of plays is well substantiated. Her method is based on drawing together a vast range of available readings, yet she manages to find an original place for her own interpretations.

I appreciate the scrupulous research and minute work with secondary sources. The list of bibliography is a rich field of sources for subsequent students of similar material. The erudition of the author is definitely above average.

While Eva Bilská scrupulously deals with her secondary material, she never silences her source text of Shakespeare's plays. She always bears in mind the complexity of her individual characters and never submits them to the straitjacket of theoretical readings. Her interpretation is, however, never at the expense of theory. The range of applied theory is vast – from the discourse of law (Shylock) to colonial discourse and Foucaultian concepts of power/knowledge (Caliban and others).

Despite these positive remarks, there are some (few) errors and problems:

1. The bibliography list does not manage to cover all the texts dealt with in the body of the dissertation. On page 26 there is a confusing textual reference: is the source text *Reflex* or *Respekt*? Moreover, this reference is missing in the bibliography. Indeed, the list does not seem to be complete: where is e.g. Peter Brooke and his essay? Also, the footnotes ought to differentiate between (Peter) Brown and (John Russell) Brown.
2. Footnotes are misnumbered on page 54 and in the passages dealing with *Macbeth*.
3. The thesis seems to suggest that several characters imply new tendencies in the approach to Nature, psyche and evil, reflecting changes in Shakespeare's times. How do they anticipate the Hobbesian ethos and transform the meaning of the Machiavel-myth?

Overall, I find the submitted thesis to more than fulfil the usual requirements for an MA dissertation in its scope of reading, clarity of formulation and argumentation, level of academic English idiom (with a few minor problems). I definitely recommend the text for defence with the preliminary mark of excellent.

Doporučuji diplomovou práci k obhajobě s předběžným hodnocením v ý b o r n ě.

V Praze dne 28.1.2014

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