



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

Supervisor's Report:

Františka Schormová, "Wives and Whores: Female characters in the plays of Harold Pinter," BA thesis

Choice of Topic:

The proposed topic of this BA thesis is certainly both an ambitious and fruitful one. The thesis attempts a reappraisal the Feminine in Pinter's plays and navigates a careful route through widely differing critical attitudes to the representation of women in his work. Ms Schormová approaches this task with an attention feminist discourse and a sensitivity to Pinter's plays as text and performance in a manner that marks this thesis as noteworthy piece of work for a BA level student.

Thesis statement / aims and objectives:

The project is constructed around a cogently articulated set of aims. Ms Schormová challenges the understanding of Pinter's depiction of female characters as simply misogynist, but wisely does not suggest that the plays simply function as a critique of patriarchy either. The selection of three of Pinter's most challenging works – *The Homecoming*, *Old Times* and *Betrayal* – provides a rich territory of investigation. The objectives of the work are specific and perceptively developed throughout in a combination of contextual, conceptual and analytic modes. The limits of the enquiry and the selection of texts and performances for analysis are both coherently explained.

Structure and development:

The organization of the thesis is logical and there is a good sense of coherence throughout. In chapter two Ms Schormová showcases her research into the concepts and ideas that inform a discussion of the Feminine and representations of women in literary and theatre texts. She does a fine job in tracing the main lines in a genealogy of feminist thought that includes Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet, Sue-Ellen Case, Marc Silverstein and Elaine Aston. Ms Schormová's ability to outline this conceptual field deserves praise. The transition to the analysis of Pinter's plays is well handled. Chapter three elaborates a detailed analysis of the women characters in selected plays under three main subheadings: male dominance, the gaze and male bonding. Although occasionally, the commentary here leans a little heavily on the work of Marc Silverstein, this does not spoil the overall lucidity of the close reading and synthesis of critical tools with textual analysis. Chapter four is adventurous in its attempt to bring performance analysis into the picture and it is a strategy to be encouraged in research work on theatre. Unfortunately as this chapter was written late in the whole composition process, it is less polished than the preceding parts of the thesis both linguistically and analytically. Ideally I would have liked to have seen at least another draft of this chapter and would have encouraged Ms Schormová to go further with her explorations of these productions. The concluding chapter avoids unnecessary repetition but reiterates the findings of the work in a perspicacious manner.



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Research:

The research undertaken for this project extends well beyond the usual range for a BA work. Ms Schormová certainly has potential to go further with her studies. The resources sought out, selected and used by Ms Schormová testify to a dedication and sense of initiative that is laudable. She has succeeded in assembling a strong bibliography and good performance corpus. These materials are throughout the work deployed with skill and judgement.

Use of sources:

There are no major formal or stylistic issues concerning the use of sources; Materials have been cited appropriately throughout. Well done.

Stylistics and language:

Ms Schormová's writing style is excellent—fluent, consistent and accomplished (with the slight exception of chapter four). Language clearly and effectively communicates ideas, and for the most part is nuanced and eloquent.

Format:

Consistent use of appropriate format. A great deal of care has been taken with format of the project.

I recommend the thesis for defence and propose to grade the work "EXCELLENT" / 1.

25.8.2014

Doc. Clare Wallace, PhD