The submitted BA thesis explores the presence of William Shakespeare’s two tragedies, *Hamlet* and *Coriolanus*, in T. S. Eliot’s poetry, be it by way of quotations, allusions or analogies. Because Eliot’s writing is essentially intertextual, the student first provides a brief explication of the term “intertextuality”, referring mostly to René Wellek and Julia Kristeva (who actually coined the term). Regrettably, she does not include Bakhtin’s concept of *heteroglossia*, which indisputably inspired most of the ensuing debates and definitely influenced Kristeva’s understanding of intertextuality.

In the following part (Chapter I) the student maps, as briefly as possible, the history of (predominantly English) Shakespeare criticism up to Eliot’s times. This outline is not only brief but disquietingly selective, even with respect to Eliot’s position to this history. Thus the key tenets of Romantic criticism can hardly be understood without some knowledge of the previous generations’ attitudes to Shakespeare, including, beside Johnson, such figures of the European Enlightenment as Voltaire. The Victorian context is reduced to Dickens and Carlyle but Eliot was especially critical of Swinburne’s reading of Shakespeare and other Elizabethan poets (see *The Sacred Wood*) and Swinburne himself had authored a Shakespeare monograph called *A Study of Shakespeare* (1880). On the other hand, the student tries to cover all the essential facts of Eliot’s own criticism of Shakespeare, focusing more and more on Eliot’s position to the two tragedies.

The following two chapters provide ample comments on Eliot’s use of *Hamlet* and *Coriolanus* in *Prufrock*, *The Waste Land*, “Little Gidding”, “Ode” and “Coriolan”, i.e. poems of different periods and of different significance. The student pays close attention to the passages for which Shakespearean allusions are characteristic. These comments are fine, yet, given an unequal quality of the poems, one wonders why the thesis excludes other Shakespeare’s plays, e.g. *The Tempest*, which plays a much more crucial role in *The Waste Land*, Eliot’s opus magnum, than *Hamlet*. This is a problem of conception: do we need a thesis that will trace all the presence of Shakespeare’s two plays in Eliot’s poetry or do we need a thesis that will clearly show the role Shakespeare played in Eliot’s textual strategies? If the latter question is our goal, then we should not exclude the rest of Shakespeare’s output but instead disregard what is insignificant or accidental (if not an overt failure) in Eliot.

This issue is closely connected with my impression that sometimes the student reads more into Eliot’s poetry than it actually contains. A typical example is her attempt to see some parallelism between Lil and Ophelia in the second part of *The Waste Land*, suggested by the line “Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies…,” a quote from Ophelia’s mad speech. But Lil is just a subject of gossip and her “suffering” is relativized by the biased attitude of her friend. Even the fact that their sexuality is not regenerative does not connect them – Ophelia dies a virgin, while Lil is no more regenerative after five childbirths. It is hard to find any direct connection and Eliot’s intention is indeed different. The above quote was also a popular parting cry in English pubs of the post-war years and Eliot jokingly made use of it to underscore his prevailing rhetorical strategy in the poem, oscillating between a phrase’s actual linguistic use and its universal resonance within the simultaneous order.
From the above it is clear that Maryna’s attempt to explore Shakespeare’s presence in Eliot is fair, yet not without limitations. That is why I recommend her thesis for defence but incline to suggest the preliminary mark as “velmi dobrá” (very good).

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