

Opponent's Report on Kryštof Chamonikolas's Diploma Thesis:

“Fictional Paths to ‘A Larger Truth’ in American New Journalism”

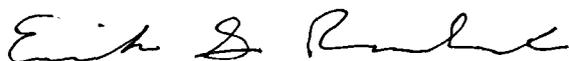
Mr. Kryštof Chamonikolas seeks to illuminate, from a genuinely theoretically inflected point of view, the complexity of the literary genre of the unsung, ill-appreciated and under-researched ‘American new journalist novel’, or what Truman Capote calls the “non-fiction novel”. The ninety-page diploma text contains six major units of writing with special attention accorded Capote’s In Cold Blood and Norman Mailer’s The Armies of the Night.

Mr. Chamonikolas’s thesis contains a good deal of work of high quality to be lauded; for his is a highly self-reflexive approach in how he knows what he is and what he is not doing methodologically; further, his mode of analysis and individual lines of reasoning, even where the reader may beg to differ, is quite careful and just (cf. 20/21). This deserves special recognition.

I would ask the candidate 1) if it would be a source of epistemological/aesthetical embarrassment or even individual grave failing to attempt a 1965-1979 post new journalist novel today given the immensity of the stakes for some kind of higher and more sophisticated sense of reality (I ask this in the light also of your comments on p. 31 about post 9/11 exertions in prose writing and also your remarks about Mailer’s work on pp. 61-64)? 2) Given our control-oriented social milieux, would such a foregoing aesthetic task even be possible? 3) If so, why? Or 4) if not, why not? 5) Given the advanced mass postmodern sell out to notions such as the nation-state, gender, economic class and ethnic race, and our own very materially determined postmodern world views, how plausible is it now that a “writer” in the heart of the Anglo-American imperium would be able to get out of such ironclad social, psychic and ideological determinative facts to expose such social machinations for the liberal corporatist order?

As concerns the prose style, the thesis is generally well written. But there are some lapses or typos such as when we should read “Since the traditional novel” not “Since traditional novel” (19), “Since he conceptualizes the novel” not “Since he conceptualizes novel” (22), “of the nonfiction novel” not “of nonfiction novel” (28), “Virginia Woolf” not Virginia Wolf” (42), “below” not “bellow” (65), “as well as” not “as well” (69), “Woolf” not “Wolf” (75), “Similar to the metafiction” not “Similarly to metafiction” (75), “Sterne” not “Stern” (75) and “postmodern” not “postmodren” (78). Also, the question of gender pronoun politics merits mention because the candidate often uses such expressions as s/he, her/his, herself/himself where it would be better to alternate or to stick to only one gender for the sake of a more fluid reading experience from a visual/cognitive point of view. This diploma thesis, nevertheless, remains a real pleasure to read. For these abovementioned errors constitute the absolute bulk of the stylistic deficiencies in this study.

Recommended mark: výborná



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