



FACULTY OF ARTS  
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY  
IN PRAGUE



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

**OPPONENT'S REPORT  
BA THESIS**

**Deconstructing the Fantastic World of Wes Anderson: The Philosophy Behind the  
Artificial Surface of a Contemporary Director**

Lucia Szemetová

Lucia Szemetová presents an appreciative analysis of eight films by Wes Anderson, namely *Bottle Rocket*, *Rushmore*, *The Royal Tenenbaums*, *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*, *The Darjeeling Limited*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *Moonrise Kingdom* and *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. In her own words, she aims “to reveal the essential stylistic and content elements as well as the exceptional characterization in his cinema” (5). To this end, she introduces the director and reviews his eight films, sketches their postmodern & metamodern contexts, discusses the relationship of cinema to philosophy, and in three chapters analyzes Anderson's style, themes and characters. Ms. Szemetová's conclusion is that although far from faultless, Anderson's cinema is marked by sincerity and genuine nostalgic sentiment which demonstrates “a deep respect for former times, which is also achieved by the use of pastiche” (11). The director's sincere treatment of his subject, in the candidate's view, ultimately takes him away from postmodernism to metamodernism.

Not being an expert on Anderson's cinema, I have no objections to Ms. Szemetová's treatment of his films. One thing I would have welcomed is a more elaborate discussion of the pastiche technique, since Ms. Szemetová puts such an emphasis on it. At one point she argues that Anderson's “films resemble artistic compositions made up of selected other works, either through borrowing techniques and certain styles or through incorporating various references to other artists” (11) but concrete examples are offered only in the final paragraphs of chapters 4 and 5, and the references there are treated in a fairly cursory manner. What are the consequences of Anderson's choice of these particular works? How do we know (when) they demonstrate “respect for former times”? (By the way, are there any female and non-white filmmakers, writers, etc. Anderson references?) And do any other references come to mind besides Kubrick, Welles, etc.? For example, would Ms. Szemetová consider Menzel's *I Served the King of England* as a possible albeit not explicitly mentioned “useful model” for *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, which Stuart Klawans proposed in *The Nation*? (<https://www.thenation.com/article/missing-pictures/>)

Proposed grade: Excellent or Very Good (1 or 2)

Pavla Veselá, PhD.  
September 5, 2016