

Anna Araslanova, *Jeanette Winterson's Postmodern Historical Novels: Sexing the Cherry and The Passion as Historiographic Metafictions*

BA thesis

Opponent's review

Anna Araslanova's thesis consists of two major parts, the first of which maps the development of the historical novel and the changing concept of history which the British historical novel reflects, and the second focuses on the use of history in the two early novels by J. Winterson. Her conception is absolutely relevant to the topic and her approach satisfying. In the theoretical part the student is able to present the basic issues in a lucid way – she includes both the traditional concepts (Lukács's) and more recent ones, inspired by poststructuralism and New Historicism (H. White's, L. Hutcheon's, et al.), showing in what way the *grand histoire* narratives gave way to alternative accounts and perspectives in the second half of the 20th century. The student focuses most of all on the historiographic metafiction theory of Linda Hutcheon, seeking clues for the strategies Winterson makes in her "historical" novels.

The analytical Chapter III is divided into three parts, in which the two novels are discussed from the point of view of historicity, gender and the fantastic. The student's comments on these aspects relate to the basic tenets of the above theoretical sources though she occasionally tends to be reproductive rather than analytical. My only (and minor) objection concerns one particular problem of the theoretical basis of her thesis: one of the issues in historical metafiction is the fact that traditionally marginalized perspectives (such as that of women) are given voice; subchapter III/3 deals with Women's Histories accordingly. This of course includes the topic of gender and gender construction, which can hardly be discussed unless some theories by major gender studies figures are included (especially J. Butler's). Such concepts are, however, lacking in this part of the thesis.

Nevertheless I believe that the submitted thesis meets the requirements for BA dissertations and can be **recommended for defence**. I am happy to do so and suggest the preliminary mark to be "výborně" (excellent).

PhDr. Zdeněk Beran, Ph.D.

13 June, 2016