

Supervisor's report on the BA thesis of **Tomáš Suchánek**

Resonance and Self-resonance: Gilles Deleuze's Involuntary Memory in Samuel Beckett and Marcel Proust

It is a very rare moment when a BA thesis contains a large body of original research supported by a close analysis of examined texts, which are in a different language than the main tongue studied in our curriculum. Although this characteristic may sound extravagant, the subject and execution of Mr Suchánek's thesis are fully relevant, if not desirable, for the study of Anglophone literatures. The thesis is focused on the Francophone trilogy of Samuel Beckett, the novels *Molloy*, *Malone meurt* and *L'Innomable*, only later translated, or rather adapted into English. The French perspective is important also because the thesis is a comparative study of the narrators, narrative strategies and style in Beckett's later novels and Proust's *In Search for Lost Time*. Suchánek shows persuasively and on the basis of detailed research the generally underestimated importance of Proust's novel series for Beckett. He focuses on the major problem of Beckett's writing, novelistic as well as dramatic, namely the deconstruction of subjectivity, leading to what Žižek has called "subject without subjectivity". The contrast between Proust's "transversality" of involuntary memory (as interpreted by Gilles Deleuze) and Beckett's "schizoid" narrator (both remembering and writing), is interpreted very thoughtfully, revealing that Beckett's novels realize the negative potentiality of Deleuze's "signs of art" and their "truth" in Proust, or the "essence" which is the "absolute difference" as Deleuze has it. It can be said that the reading of Beckett in Suchánek's thesis works as an efficient intertextual commentary on Deleuze's reading of Proust (analyzed also in the original French).

Despite the fact that a vast body of the thesis is in French, I am confident that this aspect rather reveals than obscures its message. Suchánek shows the importance of the problems of bilingualism, which have not been sufficiently researched (an exception is a book by Linda Collinge, *Beckett traduit Beckett: de Malone meurt à Malone dies: L'imaginaire en traduction*, Droz 2000) and are crucial for understanding later Beckett and his liminal position between Anglophone and Francophone cultures. It is well-known that Beckett had problems with the English versions of his novels: while *Molloy* was translated in collaboration with Patrick Bowles, *The Unnamable* was an adaptation of the French novel. In my opinion, Suchánek has produced a valuable interpretation of Beckett's novels which may serve as a point of departure for the research of Beckett's bilingualism and the role of his oeuvre in intercultural communication.

To conclude, I am fully confident that Mr Suchánek's thesis is based on thorough and efficient close reading of Beckett, which even goes beyond the limits of Deleuze's reading of Proust especially in detailed rhetorical analyses of Beckett's narratives. The use of the theory and methodology derived from Deleuze's reading of Proust is effective since it helps to create a consistent philosophical framework. This framework is based on the approach to the problem of truth in Nietzsche and Deleuze and on Deleuze's view on the revelation of truth in the work of art and the impact of this process on the decentring of the narrator's subjectivity. It can be said that the Deleuzian-Proustian angle has helped Suchánek to overcome the schematic features and cultural limits of conventional readings of Beckett.

Due to its efficient theoretical reflection, close reading supported by thorough research and chiefly thanks to its comparative approach revealing insufficiently researched aspects of Beckett's fiction and bilingualism, Suchánek's dissertation by far exceeds the standards not only of BA theses, but also of MA theses at our department. It bears many features of a successful PhD dissertation. The only shortcoming is the lack of language editing caused, among others, by the thesis's great length, which, however, is the effect of Suchánek thoroughness, rather than of his incapacity to condense.

I am very happy to recommend the thesis for the defence and propose to grade it as "excellent".

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prof. PhDr. Martin Procházka, CSc.