

Supervisor's report on M.A. thesis by

Darya Kulbashna

“René Daumal’s *Mount Analogue* and Alejandro Jodorowsky’s *The Holy Mountain*: From Pataphysics to Power”

Ms. Darya Kulbashna’s thesis work investigates ideology, language and power in R. Daumal’s unfinished 1952-novel *Mount Analogue: A Novel of Symbolically Authentic Non-Euclidean Adventures in Mountain Climbing* and in a 1973-film based on this novel text by A. Jodorowsky entitled *The Holy Mountain*. The thesis contains 98 pp. across some preliminary matter, seven parts, a Bibliography, an Appendix, and an Abstract in English and in Czech. The main sections include: “Introduction”, “Chapter 1: Language”, “Chapter 2: Method”, “Chapter 3: Action”, Chapter 4: Balance”, “Chapter 5: Power” and a “Conclusion”.

As for the prose style, it reads well, though there are some very rare mistakes. These include the following: “for harmonious” (51) should be “for the harmonious” (51), “ceasing” (51) needs to add “the ceasing” (51), “supposedly authentic state” (51) should be “supposedly an authentic state” (51), “resolution” (53) requires “the resolution” (53). All in all, the text is to be sure very well crafted and written.

As the candidate succinctly puts it, “*Mount Analogue* tells a satirical story about traveling, mountain climbing, and most importantly spiritual ambition” (5). The use of Lacan to throw light on her chosen objects of focus is effective in Chapter 1. As we read, “Psychoanalysis, therefore, does not concentrate on the exploration of objective reality, which is among the primary preoccupation[s] [sic] of science, it dissects the unconsciousness by means of symbolical interpretation” (18). Not only this, “What psychoanalysis wants to achieve is the exploration of the unconscious in order to construct a ‘healthy’ consciousness” (25). The second chapter contains work to be commended on the methodology used in the thesis. Chapter 3 on action does a good job of defining the nature of pataphysics and also of enlisting Lacanian psychoanalysis in its critical forays. Chapter 4 on Balance elucidates the film *The Holy Mountain* with the assistance of Lacanian psychoanalysis, among other critical tools. Chapter 5 on Power illuminates this subject area in both the novel and the film aforementioned. Critics such as Althusser, Foucault, Baudrillard, B. Kraus, J. Torfing, G. Therborn, and others are used. The Conclusion wraps things up in a cogent way for this reader. The thesis works at a high level with sophisticated critical instruments and theories.

I have two questions. The last chapter on power and authority discusses the subject in a way that valorizes the notional idea of a disconnect from both. I wonder if with the textual and ideological space the chosen novel and film offer there is an emancipated and nonhegemonic form of nonpower (or by extension of nonauthority) or of antipower (or of antiauthority) on which the candidate might put a name, other than those adduced in the chapter when we read of “instructive power (that comes directly from authorities), personal power (knowledge that leads to the state of enlightenment) and oppositional power (the one that works against the laws of language and ideology in order to achieve a different type of power, which is personal)” (75)? Another second query concerns the nature of the two texts engaged

in the thesis, and whether the candidate considers these two cultural forms as incommensurable with one another, or whether they are on some level concerned with the same raw and thematic materials?

In light of the foregoing mentions, I hereby recommend the pre thesis defense mark of a 1 (výborně) for the thesis work.

doc. Erik S. Roraback, D.Phil. (Oxon.)
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