

## **Johana Labanczová's M. A. thesis – review written by the supervisor**

Ms. Labanczová's M. A. thesis gives a persuasive analysis of the commodification of knowledge in the selected academic/university/campus novels, namely Pnin, The Breast and White Noise. Commodification for Ms. Labanczová, rightly, does not mean money, but reification, banalization, spectacularization and fragmentation, four distinct phenomena operating also within the narrative structure of the chosen works (see the highly organized table of contents). Thus, given the years of publication of the individual novels, Ms. Labanczová was able to trace their development, and finally show that all the primary texts are actually politically engaged (see Jameson versus Hutcheon debate).

In her discussion, Ms. Labanczová demonstrated a profound understanding of the key (and often very demanding) postmodern concepts, her extensive secondary sources ranging from the almost classical (Bauman, Baudrillard, Benjamin, Debord etc.) to the very contemporary (published even in 2012). All her observations are valid, precise and to the point, and her central argument (together with the potential challenges mentioned towards the end) leaves little space for critical remarks or doubts. Ms. Labanczová applied all the theoretical background very meaningfully, performed an extremely thoughtful close reading, and the insight she thus gained clearly exceeds our expectations for an M. A. thesis.

The only regret one might have thus relates to the rather abrupt concluding passages referring to the further possible research in the area. While Ms. Labanczová refers to the article dealing with the so called Clinton-Era academic novels (Blue Angel, Dying Animal), she is not devoting any attention to the actual novels, and both of them could have provided her with relevant material. Francine Prose's Blue Angel deals not only with PC, but mainly with sex and power relationships (not from a strict feminist perspective, though), and the same can be said about e. g. David Mamet's Oleanna – does it mean, then, that there is a new recent shift, where knowledge is being replaced by sex, and if so, what would that mean for her central argument? And would she eventually like to treat in the same light some other Roth's novels – next to Dying Animal, probably – and even more importantly – Human Stain? In other words, I would want her to address that theme during the oral defense.

Finally, I feel obliged to mention that while Ms. Labanczová's English is flawless, her Czech could be improved: e.g. on p. 68, line 3 „chápání informacemi“ makes no sense, and there is a misprint on p. 69 („páce“ instead of „práce“).

This being the case, I am suggesting the following grade: výborně/excellent. In addition, it is my firm belief that Ms. Labanczová's thesis should be nominated for our Mathesius award, and I am looking forward to the report written by the opponent.

Dr. Hana Ulmanová, M.A.

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