

Supervisor's Report

Kateřina Pínová, "The Production History and Reception of Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* in Irish and Czech Contexts" (MA Thesis)

Ms Pínová's thesis represents a valuable case study in the recent reception of Irish drama in Europe, and specifically offers some insight into the process of transferring drama from its context of origin to a new destination. Focusing on one of the most successful plays of the last three decades, Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*, the candidate has made extensive research on prominent Irish and all professional Czech production, the results of which are summarised in her comprehensive study.

Ms Pínová's outline of the individual productions is very useful and comprises all significant aspects, from the use of the play text through casting and acting, stage and costume design, use of music and dance, up to the presentation of the play in programme brochures. It also features a representative sampling of reviews, and in one instance also an interview with the director of a Czech production. This in itself provides a useful source for future research.

However, the chief strength of the thesis lies in the concluding chapter which attempts a comparison of the Irish and the Czech productions. It features an intelligent discussion of the principal issues involved in the production of any foreign play which includes local detail, and assesses the pros and cons of the approach of Czech directors to *Dancing at Lughnasa*, who by and large decided to suppress local references in favour of a Chekhovian resonance. Moreover, the candidate's argument is supported by an interview with a prominent Czech theatre critic specialising in Irish drama. In my view, the chapter could be used as the basis for a sound academic article to be offered to an international theatre studies journal.

The thesis is introduced by a textual analysis of the play, which is followed by an outline of the historical and political context pertinent to its setting. While the discussion of the latter is lucid and to the point (perhaps with the exception of the inconclusive summary of the information on the feast of Lughnasa gathered from folklorists), the interpretation of the play is somewhat lengthy and requires restructuring. The use of critical studies on the play, while by no means exhaustive, is sufficient for the purpose; however, the passage concerning communication and ritual in the play lacks appropriate referencing (even the selected monographs consulted by the candidate feature many of the observations made by her in this passage).

The work features a rather high number of typographical errors, which would have been easy to eradicate; the same is true of the positioning of some of the footnotes, which occasionally appear on a page subsequent to the appropriate one.

Despite these reservations, I recommend the thesis for defence and propose to grade it as “excellent” or “very good”.

Prague, 10 May 2013

doc. Ondřej Pilný, PhD