

Posudek oponenta na bakalářskou práci Terezy Bambuškové

“The Depiction of Inner Consciousness in the Short Stories by Katherine Mansfield”

The main concern of this BA thesis is the consciousness of the focalizer character as representative of the conflict between society and the individual. For analysis it applies mainly the theories of Freud's ego and superego, considering mainly, on the one hand, themes and events, on the other, language and narration. The modernist concept of epiphany is focused on as a manifestation of the ego, with symbol as an important vehicle.

Ms Bambušková writes her thesis in a clear, concise and wonderfully economical style. Her formulations are very precise and always to the point. The care that went into all the formal requirements did not go unnoticed and is fully appreciated. Just as the logically organized structure and persuasive argumentation.

I also appreciate the perfect balance between the use of secondary sources and innovative complex interpretations of symbols (the fly, the pear tree, and especially the aloe). The comments on narrative strategies are valuable and prove Ms Bambušková's sensitive approach to text and simultaneously her ability to subtly analyse stylistic nuances.

I do not perceive any major flaws in conception or argumentation. The sample of stories also works well and is considerable enough not to yield simplified conclusions. Below are only a few questions that were inspired by the reading:

Ms Bambušková herself acknowledges a problem with the application of Freud's theories: symbols with Mansfield have such broad meanings that they can be attributed both to the ego and the superego. Also, since Freud actually rather disappears from the discussion in chapters 2 and 3, is there really a great need for him? Especially since the thesis seems to be concerned with narrative and the ways that an individual is influenced by social norm/conventions and patterned behavior. Could not one reach the same results without Freud, with the application of narratology and some basic social analysis?

On the other hand, it is quite important that the Modernists were influenced by Freud. Yet, paradoxically, some of them who were rather close to Freudian interpretations of the human psyche disliked him (e.g. Joyce). Did Katherine Mansfield provide us with any indication as to her knowledge or attitude to Freud? For example, in her journal or correspondence?

The thesis mentions briefly a difference in the specific conception of epiphany among several Modernist writers (Joyce, Woolf). Can we have more on this topic? What are the differences exactly about, what do they imply? (For example, is Joyce in his version – moments of special insight yielded through the unconscious - closer to Freud? Where could we locate Mansfield? What exactly would epiphany mean when applied to Mansfield?)

And last, the conceptualization of perception, space and time by the Modernists was no doubt influenced by the anti-positivist thought of Nietzsche (and his followers like Ortega y Gasset etc.), who emphasized the idea of multiple points of view, variety of interpretations against “pure reason” and objective reality. Nietzsche and his followers start talking about so-called perspective vision or perspectivism. Mansfield is obviously related to this modernist notion of space/time perception. What would interest me is whether one could consider in any way a relation between such philosophical concepts and the narrative techniques of “perspectivization” as considered in the thesis?

The BA thesis definitely meets all the requirements for such academic work and therefore I fully recommend it for defence with the preliminary grade excellent.

Doporučuji práci k obhajobě s předběžným hodnocením **výborně**.

V Praze dne 12.6.2014

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oponent