

## **Vladimír Novák's B. A. thesis – review written by the supervisor**

Mr. Vladimír Novák's B.A thesis, **Grotesque, or Queer? Homosexual Characters in Tennessee Williams's Selected Short Stories**, is, in my opinion, a work of first-rate scholarship, that goes way beyond the usual quality at this level. As I see it, Mr. Novák managed to come up with a new and original interpretation of the primary texts; at the same time, he did not neglect the existing secondary sources (John Clum, David Savran), and was able to elaborate on them in a fruitful manner. Thus, since his case is truly exceptional, I believe this thesis might be even taken into consideration for Mathesius award.

The main merits of Mr. Novák's thesis are its interdisciplinary nature, deep insight into the issues raised and careful precision, as well as the rather unique juxtaposition of grotesque and/or queer readings of the selected short stories. Mr. Novák's conclusion is very persuasive precisely because he relies on established authorities (Maria Haar, Michel Foucault, Judith Butler) and manages to enroll them, so to speak, on his side, yet dares to come up with unexpected links and finally states what his own position is. Before he reached his goals, he had to study a huge and solid body of Southern literary history and criticism, as well as find and meaningfully incorporate fastly growing contemporary queer theories; and last but not least, he had to develop his own appropriate close-reading method. I feel I also have to add that he needed just minimal guidance; all his findings are truly his, and I take no credit for that.

As I was unable to detect a single actual or even potential flaw in Mr. Novák's argument, I would like him to briefly answer the following questions; even though they go beyond his focus, I find them quite relevant for possible further research.

1/ In light of grotesque and queer features, how would he compare the homosexual characters from the selected short stories to those of the well-known dramas (e.g. Blanche's former husband from *A Streetcar Named Desire*, or Brick from *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*)?

2/ Would he eventually want to choose e.g. Truman Capote's *Other Voices, Other Rooms* for a similar analysis; if so, why; if not, why not?

This being the case, I am suggesting the following grade: „výborně/excellent“. The final result, though, depends on Mr. Novák's performance during the oral defense, as well as on the review written by the opponent.

Prague, August 20, 2015

Dr. Hana Ulmanová, M.A.