

**Marija Zdraveska, “*And the Land Lay Still*”: *Worldmaking, Topography and the Modern Scots Novel***

BA Thesis  
Opponent’s Review

The present thesis deals with the problem of transformation of the traditional topography of the Scottish novel in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as reflected in the major works of Alasdair Gray (*Lanark*, 1981), Janice Galloway (*The Trick Is to Keep Breathing*, 1989) and Iain Banks (*The Crow Road*, 1993).

The student opens her discussion with a chapter on the relationship between literary landscape and national identity, in which she points to the fact that landscape in works of art is a construct determined by many cultural factors. This introductory part is very well researched and her arguments sound convincing. With this theoretical concept in mind she then presents three “topographical” stereotypes of the Scottish novel, characteristic of it mostly in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century – Tartanry (reflecting idealised life of the Highlands), Kailyardism (representing an idealised image of the Scottish countryside) and Clydesidism (standing for the clichés of industrialised and urban Scotland). These three stereotypical landscape models are challenged and subverted by prevailingly postmodern fiction, in whose inauguration into Scottish literature Gray played a seminal role.

The latter half of the thesis analyses the three aforementioned novels and shows in what way landscape is constructed in them. I have some slight reservations concerning the student’s method applied in these chapters though I generally consider this part to be successful as well. First, I think that the question of landscape in *Lanark* deserves more detailed attention as it is more complex than what the discussion of it suggests, especially because the novel addresses the issue of uncertain personal identity and its construction and deconstruction. Second, Galloway’s conception is presented in a rather fuzzy way, depending mostly on quotations from secondary sources (this is a general problem: sometimes the student’s argument changes into a patchwork of quotations from critical literature, not all of which seem fully relevant). Would it be possible to explain more accurately how female identity forms the suburban topography of Galloway’s novel? Is it only something that is local and global at the same time (and as such, paradoxically, lacking gender characteristics) or is it possible to see affinity with the images of suburbia as they appear in the English novel of the 1970s and early 1980s (Bainbridge, McEwan, etc.)? What is its specificity in Galloway, in more concrete terms?

Conclusion: I recommend the BA thesis of Marija Zdraveska for defence and suggest a preliminary grade of excellent (**výborně**).

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