



Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur

Posudek vedoucí na diplomovou práci **Kristýny Hoblové**
“The reflection of the Exclusion Crisis (1678-1683)”

First and foremost it needs to be stated that the submitted MA dissertation is a prime example how literature researched on BA level can be further considered and developed on the Masters level. Kristýna Hoblová defended her excellent BA thesis on the topic of “The Political Voice of Aphra Behn” where, among others, she touched upon the workings of Restoration politics and the literary tropes of Whig and Tory writings. As suggested and hoped for by both opponent and supervisor, she indeed did return to the topic and developed it further in relation to the political “micronarrative” of the Exclusion Crisis and the Popish Plot. As a result, Ms Hoblová managed to show how the products of the Restoration era precisely because of their interest in topical and current events transcend period limitations and actually do address universal issues and speak even to our age. Indeed, perhaps even more today than ever before, interest in the relation of culture and politics is inevitable. The manipulative strategies of mass propaganda make the study of utmost interest right now.

I find the dissertation admirably cogent, clearly structured and formulated, highly readable (notwithstanding its length!). The survey of historical events is important and the selection of texts makes sense. One could perhaps argue that a focus on plays predominantly does create certain problems – as drama is always more public and dependent on economic concerns. Perhaps more attention to poems and other printed matter could have provided a broader range of possible tropes (e.g. John Oldham’s Satire on Four Jesuits, 1678 to 81...)

The choice of topic, as stated above, is very relevant. In the Restoration period the English press was undergoing some of the most important transformations in its history. The seventeenth-century growth in literacy and emergence of a public sphere in print and politics were all faces of the same phenomenon. During the Restoration period, it was mainly the Popish Plot, Exclusion Crisis and the Glorious Revolution that galvanized political opinions and created the emergent political groupings that were to be referred to as the Tories and the Whigs.

The selection of Habermas and a critical reading of him is therefore obvious and inevitable. Also, in England’s dynastic monarchy the sovereignty of the state is itself a family affair (and the Exclusion Crisis was a political and public event that turned on the most intimate secrets of sexual and marital behaviour). Hence a contiguity of the “private” and the “public”, of love/sex and politics, exists on both levels of the analogy. A consequence of this is the presence of both private and public elements on both the “private” (signifying) and the “public” (signified) levels of allegorical semantics. However, I feel that perhaps a clearer and deeper analysis of the Filmerian state-family analogy may have been more clearly analysed.

And perhaps combined also with an exploration of the tropes employed by Locke in his *Two Treatises of Government*, also a product of this crisis age (written ca. 1679-80).

The list of what could have been added can of course go on, e.g. the exact role of real women such as the Duchess of Portsmouth and other royal mistresses, pamphlets about the Queen etc. But to consider what actually is in the dissertation:

The thesis deals mostly with heroic drama. Where comments on the current of politics more or less veiled as a norm in this dramatic form? That is, was allegory actually a rather standard form of expression or were there literary texts (now, I do not mean political pamphlets and broadsheets) that dealt with the Crisis in a more direct manner?

Political discussions, open or allegorically veiled, depend on freedom of press, as the relation of concepts like public and publishing make clear (making public one's opinions). Ms Hoblová mentions several times issues of censorship, both for drama and for print. She seems to simultaneously acknowledge its presence, yet downplay its importance. How did licensing and censorship influence the era? The history of print censorship in the Restoration is complex. Was it in effect during this period? And how did it work in relation to attempts to maintain Stuart hegemony?

In conclusion, it must be stated that the readings are sound and perceptive, the choice of material is well justified. The dissertation displays a keen sense for logical organization and development of an argument. Language and style is fluent and quite appropriate. Moreover, I must praise the amount of reading that went into the production of the thesis – the list of bibliography is truly admirable. (And three hoorays for the internet, without which such an endeavor would not have been manageable at all.) And, as supervisor, I must also appreciate the degree of independent research and analytical thought applied by Kristýna Hoblová. She has proved to me that she can easily orientate herself and feel quite at ease within this vast field of literature.

Therefore, I find the submitted thesis fully in keeping with the standards. I certainly **recommend it for defence** with the preliminary suggested grade of excellent (**výborně**).

V Praze dne 16.8.2016

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