

Posudek školitele:

Anna Světlíková, Typology as Rhetoric: Reading Jonathan Edwards

Although Anna studied longer than the standard duration of PhD programme, she did not waste her time. She did most of her research during her year-long stay at Yale University, supported by the J.M.W. Fulbright Commission. During her visit she established herself as a Jonathan Edwards scholar acknowledged by the leading U.S. academics in the field. She successfully presented a paper at a meeting of the Jonathan Edwards Society. After her return she gave papers at several international conferences and workshops. She also had to solve a number of problems specific to her research, when reflecting on the aims and methods of recent Edwards criticism, which were rather limited and subject-specific in comparison with her dissertation topic, and were theological rather than literary. The evidence of her ability to solve demanding theoretical and methodological problems is the dissertation's introduction which, to my mind brilliantly, manages to situate her research in the wider context of the U.S. literary history and vis-à-vis different approaches to Edwards as a major writer of American colonial literature as well as one of the most intriguing eighteenth-century Protestant theologians.

The dissertation is unique in several respects: its interdisciplinary focus combining literary studies and theology, its theoretical and methodological perspective situating Edwards in the context of recent studies of rhetoric and, last but not least, its innovative influence on historical approaches to American colonial literature and culture. The work of Jonathan Edwards is a rare conglomerate of traditional Puritan theology and keen analytical responses to recent developments in philosophy (Locke) and sciences (Newton). The focus on discursive and rhetorical approach to this complexity is unique in Edwardsian scholarship as well as in most works of American literary and cultural history. Due to this feature, Anna's dissertation, which, I hope, will soon be published, may also have an impact on methodological developments in colonial literature studies.

One of the important contributions of Anna's work to Edwardsian studies is her analysis of Christian typology as the source and basis of Edwards' writing. The key feature of her approach is the analysis of both allegorical and symbolic features of typological approach, which can be used to interpret the merger of allegory and symbol in nineteenth-century literature, especially in Hawthorne. Most relevant is also the extension of her analysis to two modern approaches using typology in the analysis of literary works: Auerbach's *Mimesis* and Frye's *Great Code*.

The dissertation further discusses the relationship of typology and language, epitomized in the analogies between the book of nature and the scripture. Here Anna's analysis directly points to the discussion of the origin and functions of language in the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson. The key distinction between the *type* and the *trope* seems useful for interpreting of Emerson's essays as well as Hawthorne's tales. However, Anna brings her analysis even further to recent philosophical study of tropes, especially the metaphor, in the works of Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man. Deconstructive approaches to metaphor and allegory are productive in her reflection about the relationship of the rhetorical and metaphysical features of Edwards' texts.

Surprisingly enough, the chapter about type and emblem does not confirm the static nature of traditional emblematic representations. It demonstrates the dynamic of Edwards' figurative language which anticipates romantic imagery in its performative qualities, rather than in preceding romantic approaches to symbol and symbolism. Edwards' performativity is analysed by means of the speech act theory (J.L. Austin) as well as by means of later deconstructive approaches of Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man. Especially productive appears J. Hillis Miller's analysis of parables as performatives which in the next chapter leads

to a fundamental re-assessment of Edwards' allegory and the discussion of its similarity to and difference from the older, Renaissance notions of allegory, as well as from the post-structuralist approach to literature as an allegory without a referent.

The conclusion brilliantly shows the potential of Anna's approach to move beyond the existing interpretations of typology (especially in Frye's work) and demonstrates the proximity of the problems of Edwards' performative writing to the questions discussed in post-structuralist theory. Exploring affinities among one of the first graduates of Yale College and the recent school of Yale deconstructionists, Anna points out the relevance of Edwards' work for present-day approaches to literary theory and history of American colonial literature. I am confident that her innovative approach will succeed in both these fields and also add a new interdisciplinary perspective to the interpretation of Edwards' theology.

It must be suspicious that my report does not contain any critical remarks. The only way of including them would be pasting my numerous comments from the time when Anna's thesis was being written. However, this would no longer be relevant, since Anna not only thoughtfully and extensively responded to all my criticisms but used some of them in a creative way to achieve surprisingly good and generally relevant results. I am confident that Anna's dissertation in all respects surpasses the general standard of PhD theses in our programme and will become, in international terms, a significant contribution to American studies as well as critical theory. **Doporučuji k obhajobě.**

V Praze, 15. března 2012

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CSc.