

FACULTY OF ARTS  
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY  
IN PRAGUE



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

**Supervisor's Review**

Blanka Synková, "Comparison of Short Stories by Katherine Mansfield and Elizabeth Bowen," BA thesis

**Choice of Topic:**

The proposed topic of this BA thesis is an interesting one with potential. The potential of the topic is partially realised by the resulting work.

**Thesis statement / aims and objectives:**

The project is constructed around a clearly articulated set of objectives, at the core of which is the goal of drawing together two important twentieth century short story writers in a comparative analysis of the contexts, formal strategies and thematic content of their work. The objectives and statement of purpose are quite consistent and well articulated in the introductory chapter.

**Structure and development:**

Overall the thesis is logically planned and developed. Chapter 1 is creditable for its clarity, both writers are strategically introduced, the comparative procedure and its limitations are well explained, and the discussion of source materials is informed and stylistically effective. Chapter 2 continues in the same vein with a strong structure and careful justification of the biographical approach as regards the contexts relevant for each author. The emphasis on hybrid identity (see p. 10-11) is perceptive. Less effective is the rather generous and, at times, tangential use of extended quotations. Similarly the space afforded to the description of lesbian subtexts and critical attitudes to Mansfield and Bowen are tantalising but no conclusion is drawn that might meaningfully enhance the thesis as a whole. Consequently, the impression imparted by the chapter is of an array of interesting information that is inadequately linked to the core project. Chapter 3 features a well sourced and lucid description of literary impressionism—of much relevance to both Mansfield and Bowen. However, the following sections on sensibility (a vague term at best which here seems to overlap with some points made in relation to literary impressionism) and film techniques fail to advance a coherent analysis. The thematic comparison undertaken in chapter 4 is perhaps the least convincing section of the thesis. Again the tendency towards description and extended quotation overtakes analytic purpose. To conclude, the thesis begins well, makes some promising initial points and is built upon some good research; later the comparison becomes rather methodical and descriptive while increasingly details are presented as self-explanatory. The final chapter makes a concerted attempt to draw the project together in connection with modernism, thus finishing the work on a strong note.

**Research:**

The research undertaken for this project is one of its most commendable features showing critical judgement and initiative. This work is deployed throughout with articulacy and self awareness.

**Use of sources:**

There are no major formal or stylistic issues concerning the use of sources. Materials have been carefully cited throughout.

**Stylistics and language:**

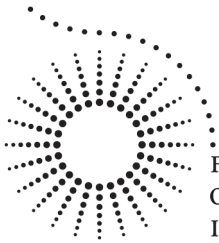
Ms Synková's writing style is fluent, consistent and accomplished.

**Format:**

Nám. Jana Palacha 2, 116 38 Praha 1  
Czech Republic

Ph./Fax: (+420) 221 619 341

ualk@ff.cuni.cz  
<http://ualk.ff.cuni.cz>  
wallace@ff.cuni.cz



FACULTY OF ARTS  
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY  
IN PRAGUE



---

Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

A great deal of care has been taken with format of the project.

I recommend the thesis for defence and propose to grade the work “very good” 2, depending on the result of the defence.

27.8.2011

Clare Wallace, PhD