

Posudek vedoucí na bakalářskou práci Marty Dongresové

“Cultural Conflicts in the Writing of Hanif Kureishi”

Kureishi's semi-autobiographical novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* is the centerpiece of this BA thesis. In her analysis of conflicts arising from clashes with mainstream society, tensions between generations and the complexities of identity formation, Marta Dongresová focuses predominantly on the above mentioned novel, yet very helpfully and innovatively also reaches out to other texts which Kureishi wrote in the 1980s and 90s. I find her approach, method applied and her conclusions to be sound, well developed and formulated in a precise manner. The thesis is written in very good English with only very few and minor errors. The bibliography is extensive and relevant. I especially appreciate the obvious grasp of theoretical concepts, which are indeed clearly applied in the body of the thesis itself.

The length and thoroughness of analysis can only be appreciated. Yet, it is perhaps also revealing of one possible shortcoming – the focus on psychological aspects of the coping strategies rehearsed by the range of representative characters prevents a look at other ways of creating meaning in Kureishi's texts: for example, literary form and genre, narration, irony and humour, language and style etc. One could see how syntax itself and, for example, the figure of zeugma syntactically expresses the conjoining of difference (and one does not have to go too far to find examples– it appears already on the opening pages of the novel). Consequently, more textual analysis could have boosted the thesis to a yet higher level.

The question of genre is also important. Though the Bildungsroman is mentioned, the potential is not fully exploited. As a social comedy of education and growing awareness, some critics would place the narrator Karim in the same category of picaresque hero as protagonists in the books of American writers like Richard Wright, James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison (all of whom Kureishi avidly read), while others saw him in terms of quintessentially English characters like Lucky Jim etc. Again, the reader can begin to consider the novel as a fusion of different types, traditions, or ethnicities (so to say, the “two histories” from the opening paragraph).

Apart from the above comments, I have only two minor questions. Firstly, what role does the novel's precise location in time play in Ms Dongresová's reading? (I mean the fact that the last day of the novel is the day of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party election in 1979.) And, secondly, what exactly does Charlie represent?

I fully recommend the thesis for defence with the preliminary mark of excellent (**výborně**).

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