

Příloha k protokolu o SZZ č.....
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~~Recenzent*)~~
Vedoucí*) diplomové práce
Ch.Koy,M.A.

POSUDEK DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

“Independent Heroines and Their Feminist Attitudes in New York City as Depicted by Edith Wharton and Candace Bushnell”

(téma)

Format/Structure:

The diploma work under review is masterfully formatted, sensibly organized and moves smoothly from one chapter to another. The quality of the writing is really commendable: virtually no errors, the very few limited to rare misusage of articles or particles. The small and minor issue is that on occasion the use of less than formal English appears now and then, the extensive use of “I” or “we” (in the sense of “we readers” or “we Americans” or “we New Yorkers,”) an ambiguity frequently applied which is not regular practice in formal exposition. Otherwise, the formatting and writing is nearly flawless.

Content:

Chapter 1 offers a concise introduction, delineating the aims of this work, particularly aimed at female denizens of New York City in the fiction of two well-known novelists, Edith Wharton and Candace Bushnell.

In chapter 2 Mr. Jandrič differentiates the issues Wharton and Bushnell confronted in their fiction which more or less reflects the social concerns as well as literary conventions of their respective times.

Chapter 3 is a compendium of the history of women’s status, the women’s rights movement and even cultural awareness of the place of women in society. It is quite thorough covering some 18 pages of social history, including employment issues, the right to vote and hold public office, and, on the other side of course the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment. One of the most conspicuous issues in the United States for women today is the right to have the right over their bodies, i.e., the right to choose to have an abortion, which has been under attack by politicians and religious fundamentalists. While not an issue touched in Wharton’s fiction, Bushnell has breached this controversial topic and this has been covered quite carefully in this chapter.

Chapter 4 covers the issues of passivity versus the woman as an active agent of their own fate, often in both cases aided by their beauty and physique. Preponderate is the matter of self-identification as influenced by recognition of powerful males. The most extreme example of this appears in the corporate world of Manhattan, the center of the greatest concentration of wealth in the U.S., via the model (who wish to become super models) and their often salacious experiences in New York City which often within a year result in ennui. This is described as the pinnacle of the postmodern experience of the American woman by Bushnell, including the ugliness of the

beauty business, the generous and penurious millionaire admirers. When reading the issues surrounding “brains” – as Bushnell has it, “I’ll sit down and read a whole magazine from cover to cover” (p. 28), one is reminded of the famous photo of Marilyn Monroe rejecting charges of being obtuse by reading Immanuel Kant’s *Critic of Pure Reason* at a party hosted by her famous intellectual husband, Arthur Miller. Rather than trying not to appear empty of intelligence, Wharton’s women characters try to dominate their future without being seen as dominating it. Mr. Jandrić brilliantly and convincingly argues this point on pp. 32-33 with regard to May Welland and her husband Newland Archer in *The Age of Innocence* and juxtaposes this with *Sex and the City* a few pages later. Treason versus reason marriages, a pun on the Whartonian critic of marriage, is how Mr. Jandrić entitles a subchapter about “choice.” When it is all boiled down, Wharton plots (and even Bushnell on rare occasions) seem merely like sophisticated novels of New York naturalism, except of course that the writing style of Wharton is so much better and the women so much wealthier and more beautiful than in naturalist novels. Bushnell on the whole is capable of occasional shock-effects that seems somewhat divorced from the original aspirations of the women she portrays. One feature that could have been mentioned is how the reader of today condoles with Bushnell characters differently than with Wharton’s tragic female characters like Lily Bart.

Chapter 5 True Heroines is the definition of independent women by both authors, or as Mr. Jandrić puts it metaphorically, “same tracks, different rules” as the title of one subchapter – a metaphor that is unctuously applied to situations in analyzing fiction in the next subchapters as well. In Bushnell’s novel these heroines, all within their coterie, include Charlotte whose great ambition is to be married and later to have a baby – an allegedly anti-feminist desire, and then realizes that she is “reproductively challenged” – thwarting hopes for her traditional desire. Mr. Jandrić manages to effortlessly and splendidly put all of Bushnell’s characters into a feminist perspective and show the pressures of the four “postmodern” women confronting often duplicitous men. Especially telling is the difficulty a successful career women like Miranda has in finding a mate whereas men of similar standing predictably have no such struggles.


Chapters 6 and 7 respectively cover what may be perceived as particularly New York issues of old money, new money, manners and the palaver among social subclasses within the milieu of the wealthy upper crust.

To sum up, it is my view that this diploma work is an excellent model of applying a particular critical perspective (in this case, feminism) to writers of different eras and comparing and contrasting the outlook of the authors. Moreover, the analysis is marked by very high quality writing, originality in theme and thoughtful assessment. To sum up, this was a diploma work which was a real pleasure for me to supervise and reread. If there is anything I feel missing, it might be a sense in which irony and subtly in Wharton might be contrasted with the writing style of Bushnell to convey in a different way the position of women. Just one question from the supervising assessment: *Why do you think Candace Bushnell, brash as she is, does not depict more conspicuous women, especially given the title of her best-known novel? (Please consider this in reference to feminist theory.)*

Assessment: výborně (1)

- výborně -

Návrh na klasifikaci diplomové práce:


podpis vedoucího diplomové práce

30.5.

V Českých Budějovicích dne 2009.....

Stupeň kvalifikace	výborně	velmi dobře	dobře	nevyhověl
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