



POSUDEK OPONENTA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)

Název práce: Allegory in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*: Spiritual and Psychological Journey to the Self

Autorka práce: Hana Pechová

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: Mgr. Tomáš Jajtner, Ph.D.

Oponent bakalářské práce: PhDr. Ladislav Nagy, Ph.D.

Stručná charakteristika práce

Hana Pechová's thesis deals with John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, focuses on the topic of allegory and tries to put Bunyan's allegory in the context of European literature. The author claims that while Bunyan's allegory shares many features with the tradition as it developed from antiquity to the 17th century, it, at the same time, overcomes the traditional mode of allegory and by emphasising individuality makes a bridge towards the emerging novel.

Celkové zhodnocení

It is very difficult indeed to assess this piece of writing. It needs to be said that the quality of language and style is very good, that the thesis reads well and runs smoothly. There are a few stylistic shortcomings but that is quite natural and the overall quality of writing is high. The topic is an interesting one and is well chosen.

The problem, however, comes with the structure. In the annotation, the author claims "Based on the comparison with the medieval form of allegory, the morality play, and with regard to the areas of narrative techniques, relationship between verse and prose, and the role of characters in both works, it tries to examine the transition from pure allegory to the modern novel." Well, to be quite frank, this "examination" does not happen until page 36 and even then lasts just for 9 lines! Although the present reader of the thesis agrees with the point the author makes, it is still a disappointment.

The thesis starts with a lengthy historical introduction. We are told that *The Pilgrim's Progress* "deserved particular critical attention not only of literary historians and critics, but also of psychologists, sociologists, and religionists." No examples are given though so the claim sounds rather too general and vague. This is followed by an even bolder claim: "I would like to deal with the aspects of this allegorical text that have contributed to its modernity and timelessness, especially the formal aspects resulting from Bunyan's conscious choice of the allegorical mode." It needs to be stressed though that this claim is never explained in the thesis and I think Mrs Pechová should provide an explanation at the defence: how is a conscious choice of allegory related to modernity?

What is a more serious problem, however, is the first half of the thesis. It is a compilation providing a Wikipedia-like introduction to allegory. Contrary to Wikipedia, however, virtually no sources are quoted. From page 9 to page 16, the author writes about the etymology of the word, about its modern definition, quoting



just two minor sources. Mrs Pechová follows the development of allegory from the antiquity to Renaissance in a rather erratic and superficial fashion (Renaissance is given just 6 lines of her explanation) which leaves the reader rather curious since neither antiquity nor Renaissance have much in common with what she wanted to write about in the first place. Secondly, some rather wild and eccentric statements are made in the course of writing: Plato is quoted as one of the "first examples of the genre" and the author mentions his myth of the cave. But this is not an allegory, is it? Again, I ask for explanation. Also I think the author should explain the difference between allegory, myth and parable. Yet more disconcerting is the lack of references. In the first half of the thesis, almost no sources are referred to. Where does all of this come from? Has Mrs Pechová read Prudentius, Cicero, Guillaume de Lorris or Jean de Meung? If she did, then I would expect something more than just banal name-dropping.

Speaking about references, it needs to be said that this provides a major problem of this thesis. Bunyan is a classic author and secondary literature is abundant in libraries, yet the bibliography is scarce, consisting mainly of online sources. The author seems to ignore the basic principles of providing references. Let me quote just one example: "Allegory." *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. 1999. Print.

To conclude I would like to point out that despite the smooth style Mrs Pechová's thesis does not show much scholarship. Although one could agree with her 9-line statement that individuality plays a significant part in *The Pilgrim's Progress* this insight is, sadly, not elaborated upon. Her thesis thus remains a well written compilation with problematic references. Given the quality of her English and the quality of presentation I do recommend Mrs Pechová thesis for defence and I recommend it to be marked as very good.

Práci doporučuji k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: velmi dobře

12.06.2013

Datum

Ladislav Nagy

Podpis