

POSUDEK BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Jméno a příjmení studenta: Matěj HEROUT

Název bakalářské práce: Sam Shepard's Drama *Fool for Love* and its Film Adaptation by Robert Altman

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: PhDr. Christopher Koy, M.A., Ph.D.

Opponentka bakalářské práce: PhDr. Alice Sukdolova, Ph.D.

- I. Cíl práce a jeho naplnění: 1. Cíl práce byl stanoven a naplněn v souladu s tématem
- II. Struktura práce: 1. Logická, jasná a přehledná
- III. Práce s literaturou: 1. Výborná: zvoleny a použity vhodné prameny v patřičném rozsahu
- IV. Formální stránka: 2. Obsahuje drobné formální chyby
- VI. Jazyková úroveň práce: 1. Výborná
- VII. Náročnost zpracování tématu: 2. Vysoká

Vyjádření vedoucího bakalářské práce:

To among the top 20th century American dramatists like E. O'Neill, A. Miller, T. Williams or E. Albee also belongs the name Sam Shepard. He worked both in Hollywood and Broadway, and also acted, directed, and wrote screenplays besides his main artistic task as playwright. His youth and beginning in theater, in addition to an upbringing as a son of a military man and California rancher, is well presented by Mr. Herout to introduce the famous author over the first ten pages of his thesis.

The plot description of the drama *Fool for Love*, while otherwise rather thorough, does not emphasize quite to my satisfaction some of the causes of the conflict between May and Eddie, though Mr. Herout appropriately notes that „this relationship is far more complicated than it seems“ (p. 13): the aggressive passion is presented without quite focusing on the incestuous relationship between these half-siblings as well as Eddie's repetition of their father's alcoholism and repeated abandonment. And to be clear, the Old Man is dead and therefore a „ghost“ (like the uncle in Miller's *Death of a Salesman* or Prince Hamlet's deceased father's ghost in Shakespeare's famous play). Ghosts are notoriously unreliable, so Hamlet checks out the facts (via questioning guards as well as the Mousetrap play). Sam Shepard's deceased father-ghost (Old Man) in this play is likewise unreliable, expressing problems of memories via both Eddie and May who mentally create this „ghost“ of their deceased father (as Shepard indicates in an early stage direction). The brother-sister lovers attempt to hammer out their issues **while this ghost of an Old Man steps in regularly**. I wish the obviously intangible nature of the Old Man might have been recognized as a ghost and

properly commented upon by Mr. Herout (he recognized the “questioning [of] the Old Man’s physical presence” once on p. 31), along with the Old Man’s impact on their problems. (Autobiographically, the author’s own father might have some relevance to Shepard’s depiction of this ghost as well). After learning that they were not cousins as he suspected, Martin refers to the „illegal“ nature of their relationship – regarding their incest – this would be entirely necessary to expand upon (much like Thomas Mann’s fiction). Otherwise, it is well written. While Mr. Herout recognizes the multigenerational abandonment/return motif as well as the point that his two children look more like their respective mothers than like the Old Man, more thorough analytical commentary would be welcomed.

Near the bottom of p. 30, Mr. Herout does not recognize the unreliable flashback as a flashback scene (just because it is unreliable does not mean it is not a flashback!): „It is not established who exactly they are“ – the girl is May as a child and her father is anxiously awaited by her mother (not appearing in the original play). The adult May gives the child May - - left alone - - a hug, just before she is called away by her mother. The adult May subsequently cries while the memory/flashback is continued by her dad’s ghost who unreliably retells the herd story: „his“ story is a „lie“ which, as Eddie said earlier is a truth. Hence, Mr. Herout’s interpretation that „they are not in a flashback“ is not accurate: the ghost tells his memory which he remembers differently, since all memories are from different perspectives – thus they may be lies to others yet are „true“ or „truth“ to the holder of the memory. I feel it important to note that while it is essential to point out this misunderstanding, it is possible that only native speakers or very highly advanced English speaking foreigners would clearly recognize these scenes as flashbacks: it seems to have fully perplexed Mr. Herout.

Like anyone who has made mistakes, May and Eddie want to turn back the clock and relive and alter those mistakes they made, perhaps to return to an impossible happier world (especially when May unites the past and present in her flashback when the adult May hugs the child May left along while her father disappears into the motel with her mother). Of course, the ultimate mistake was not their own doing, as Mr. Herout might have made a little clearer while analyzing their verbal disputes: the siblings are tragic victims who, in spite of engaging in other relationships, darkly desire and always return to each other.

Regarding play/film differences, the introduction of other characters such as the Countess, the child May and both mothers (as well as Mr. Valdez, unmentioned by Mr. Herout) is significant since most film adaptations **reduce** the number of characters! In the play the audience hears flashbacks but in the film one sees flashbacks. Likewise, Mr. Herout might have brought forth more interpretive information regarding the dry dead desert scenery so highly emphasized in the film, an obvious symbolic emphasis along with the ghost of the dead father (Old Man), who continues to pursue inebriation as an escape from the horror of reality.

The writing is clear. Occasionally some great errors appear but more frequently minor errors are on display; the thesis is well structured. The language usage should be elevated, for at times the register resembles „street English“ rather than the formal English of a scholar comparatively analyzing a literary text. A drawback regarding the retelling of plots might have been less obvious if the themes or motifs had been developed a little more deeply in Mr. Herout’s analysis.

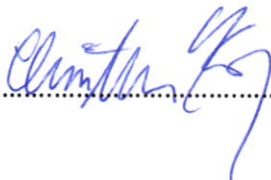
Práce splňuje základní požadavky kladené na tento typ prací, a proto ji doporučuji k ústní obhajobě.

Navrhovaná známka: výborně

Otázky k obhajobě:

1.The Goethian „ewige Weibliche“ or eternal feminine concept makes one wonder if the character May can be regarded as a transcendant figure rather than a „fallen woman“ – unlike both mothers, she does not get pregnant. Since Eddie replicates his father (alcoholic, womanizer, as well as abandoning/returning to May), would you please further compare her behavior with her mother's?

2.A lot of secondary literature was made available to you. Could you mention the ideas you used of other scholars of Shepard and if you agreed or disagreed with their interpretations?

Podpis vedoucího bakalářské práce: 

Datum: 15. 5. 2023

*nehodící se škrtněte