

POSUDEK BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Jméno a příjmení studenta: Jakub Lhoták
Název bakalářské práce: Andersonville, the Auschwitz of the Civil War in the United States, in Word and Film
Vedoucí bakalářské práce: Christopher E. Koy, Ph.D.

- I. Cíl práce a jeho naplnění: 1. Cíl práce byl stanoven a naplněn v souladu s tématem
- II. Struktura práce: 2. Přiměřená
- III. Práce s literaturou: 2. Velmi dobrá práce s adekvátními prameny v patřičném rozsahu
- IV. Formální stránka: 1. Odpovídá všem stanoveným požadavkům
- VI. Jazyková úroveň práce: 2. Velmi dobrá
- VII. Náročnost zpracování tématu: 2. Vysoká

Vyjádření vedoucího bakalářské práce:

For this thesis, Mr. Lhotak examined a longer (approaching 800 pp.) novel *Andersonville* and about a three-hour film of the same name. If the length weren't taxing enough, the issues the reader/watcher of both history-based works certainly were: the mistreatment and starvation, slow death, betrayal, escape and recapture, of many Union soldiers at a stockade prison led by a commanding officer who was eventually executed for war crimes. Mr. Lhotak properly refers to the novel as a work which brings together a broader picture including the pre-war upbringing of characters as well as post-war homecoming (or in the case of Coral Tebbs, the cavalymen going to his widow's home, as well as Ira's return to Lucy after her affair with Mr. Elkins), plots of which have been famously written about in famous Civil War homecoming short stories by Hamlin Garland, Herold Frederic and Charles Chesnutt, among others. This extended panorama of Kantor's novel from Maine to Iowa is, as Mr. Lhotak avers, completely absent in time and space in the *Andersonville* film. In time the film covers less than a year, and except initial capture in Virginia in 1864 and subsequent transport south, the overwhelming majority of the film's setting for the Massachusetts men is in or near Andersonville, ending in April, 1865. The film does not indicate how long the profiled men from Massachusetts had been engaged in combat until they arrive in Andersonville and

meet up with one of their members captured by the Confederate Army two years earlier. Both provide for the Raiders' crimes, trial and their leading personalities' execution, though it is "heavier" in the film than in the novel (if I remember correctly).

The Pulitzer-winning novel was written in the mid-1950s, mostly in 1954 in Spain. It has been translated into many languages, but unfortunately for Mr. Lhotak, not into Czech. Europe happened also to be the seed of inspiration for the novel *Andersonville*: on April 24, 1945, MacKinlay Kantor wrote a letter to his wife Irene from Germany about the smell of the German Camp Buchenwald and how he vomited seeing maggots on not yet dead bodies. In an interview Kantor, who incidentally has German-Jewish and Scottish ancestry, stated that he was "standing in Andersonville" while in Buchenwald. This background information (from the online article by Tom Shroder which I informed the student about) might well have been included in the thesis. While Shroder's book on Kantor's life may be too detailed for the purposes of this thesis, the "Look Inside" apparatus on Amazon.com offers some further (useful) information on the author of *Andersonville*.

When critiquing a film, much more attention should be placed on specific aspects inherent in the genre of cinematography: there is hardly any reference to or criticism of the approach made by the director of this film (made with a generous budget in the 1990s). Is the music appropriate, or sound effects, the clothing, and the kind of military language spoken by the Massachusetts men, as well as the other characters? How about the camera angles? As supervisor I pushed the student to attend to this matter but just a little was forthcoming beyond the historical accuracy of the plot. Most of the criticism of the film by Mr. Lhotak is simply plot-based (or comparative vis-à-vis the novel), which is somewhat unfortunate for film criticism.

All in all, this is a commendable effort, a very good work.

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

Navrhovaná známka: velmi dobře*

Otázky k obhajobě:

1. Describe the structural differences (such as chronology) between the novel and the film.
2. The historical inaccuracies you have pointed out (as we can best determine from an imperfect knowledge of history) in both the novel and the film seem to have a purpose. Why in your opinion did the novelist MacKinlay Kantor add fictitious subplots/characters (and why also regarding the film) ?

Podpis vedoucího bakalářské práce: 

Datum: 20. 5. 2022

*nehodící se škrtněte