

**Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Arts,
Palacký University Olomouc
B.A. Thesis Evaluation**

Student: Filip Salcburger

Title: A Close Reading of Samuel Beckett's *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* in Contrast to James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Supervisor: PhDr. Matthew Sweney, Ph.D.

Opponent reviewer: prof. PhDr. Michal Peprník, Dr.

	Grade A, B, C, D, E, F (F = fail)	Notes
1/ Aim/Goal: Definition Accomplishment	F E	The title does not correspond to the objectives in the introduction. There is not much of close reading, and the comparison does not work very well.
2/ Context, Background, Review of Literature	D	
3/ Theory, Key Concepts, Method, Approach: Definition Accomplishment	Not applicable	
4/ Argumentation (ability to accurately form initial and closing arguments, logical coherence, ability to generalize as well as present pertinent specific details)	E	
5/ Knowledge of primary literature	D	
6/ Knowledge of secondary literature (extent, adequacy)	E	Only very few academic sources.
7/ Originality (in argumentation, critical approach and conclusions)	E	
8/ Formal level (adhering to citation and bibliographic standards)	F	
9/ Stylistic level of the thesis	A	
10/ Stylistic level of the summary	A	
11/ Typography, graphic appearance, absence of errors	D	
12/ Structure (organization, arrangement)	E	
13 / Thesis's contribution to the field	-	

Comments and Questions for the defense:

I appreciate the author of the thesis showed courage and ambition by taking up two extraordinary texts by two great Moderns, Joyce and Beckett. Unfortunately, the thesis does not deliver what it promises to do in the introduction and in the title. The title announces close reading but little close reading is done. Then there is a contradiction between what the title and the introduction advertise. The title promises a contrastive analysis, while the introduction announces a study of influence of Joyce on Beckett. The execution stays somewhere halfway. Apart from briefly stated similarities as regards genre, and autobiographical aspects, the only extended arguments in support of the hypothesis about Joyce's influence are the themes of conflict of the spirit and the body (or body and soul??) and the motif of the first sexual intercourse as a catalyst of the inner conflict. This is not a bad starting point, but, the analysis does not go much beyond the claim.

The comments on structure of the two texts are rather contradictory and confused. According to Knowlson there is three part structure, Salcburger thinks the books are structured into 5 chapters, each chapter in the *Dream* devoted to "a different woman". But the explication is missing, the discussion starts and ends with chapter one.

The thesis does not have a Czech summary, only a translated conclusion, and notes follow neither MLA, nor Chicago Manual of Style. Several items in bibliography reference only one page of the source. This suggests that the author of the BA thesis read only that one page from the whole book. The author should be ready to discuss the sources at the oral defence.

Question:

What does John King have to say about the "difficult characters?" Why do not we get a summary of his perspective if his article seems very relevant to the thesis?

Why does the thesis work with the opposition body and spirit and not with body and soul as for example Ackerman does in his article?

As part of the discussion of the structure is a passing remark about a catalyst event for both the protagonists of the two texts. How do these events or elements relate to the modernist notion of epiphany?

In closing:

In spite of the many shortcomings, the thesis is written in very fluent academic English and it has managed to make several valid comparative points about the two texts, therefore the thesis is recommended for defense.

Suggested classification (A, B, C, D, E, F): **E**

27.8.2018

Supervisor/Opponent of the B.A./M.A. thesis
Prof. PhDr. Michal Peprník, Dr.

