

**Department of English and American Studies
Faculty of Arts, Palacký University Olomouc**

B.A. Thesis Evaluation

Student: Karel Mrhálek

Title: The Analysis of Autobiographical Elements in Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!* and *Long Day's Journey into Night*: Dark Reality and Delighted Dreams

Supervisor: prof. PhDr. Josef Jařab, CSc.

Opponent reviewer: Mgr. Šárka Dvořáková

	Grade A, B, C, D, E, F (F = fail)	Notes
1/ Aim/Goal: Definition Accomplishment	B	Well-defined. What is promised is mostly delivered (the main shortcomings are listed in point 7 below).
2/ Context, Background, Review of Literature	B	Extensive knowledge of O'Neill's biography. Claims of his excellency and difference from others would, however, be better evidenced by paying some attention to the state of American drama before and during O'Neill's life.
3/ Theory, Key Concepts, Method, Approach: Definition Accomplishment	B	The comparisons are on the whole well executed. The discussion of <i>Long Day's Journey</i> is satisfactory while the discussion of <i>Ah, Wilderness!</i> comes as more of an afterthought. Partially due to the way the first part of the comparison is structured (see point 12 below), the section on <i>Ah, Wilderness</i> occasionally lacks depth, e.g. the discussion of Essie Miller has this problem while the section on Natt Miller is much richer.
4/ Argumentation (ability to accurately form initial and closing arguments, logical coherence, ability to generalize as well as present pertinent specific details)	A	The student is capable of extracting and merging important information from multiple texts and supports his opinions with well-selected quotations.
5/ Knowledge of primary literature	A	Excellent.
6/ Knowledge of secondary literature (extent, adequacy)	B	Excellent knowledge of the sources used. On p. 13 it is, however, implied that the topic discussed in the thesis has been the subject of multiple publications. These could have been also used and compared/contrasted with the student's own views, or at least, in some fashion, listed.
7/ Originality (in argumentation, critical approach and conclusions)	C	The nature of the work's aim requires the introduction of a substantial amount of biographical information. The secondary source usage is only partly balanced by the amount of the student's own analysis of the plays, most of which occurs in Chapter 3.
8/ Formal level (adhering to citation and bibliographic standards)	B	Page numbers are missing in citations of more concrete parts of (secondary) sources when mixed with a summary of an entire work (e.g. the Waith paraphrase on p. 11, paragraph 3; or Lukeš on p. 13, paragraph 2).
9/ Stylistic level of the thesis	A	Excellent command of the language. Well written overall, only a handful of grammatical inconsistencies.
10/ Stylistic level of the summary	B	Contains some anglicisms. Its ending is too abrupt.

11/ Typography, graphic appearance, absence of errors	A	Font in footnotes doesn't match the rest of the text. Neither do most page numbers in the table of contents. Other than that, only very rare typographical inconsistencies and typos.
12/ Structure (organization, arrangement)	B	The discussions of O'Neill's family and their representations in the play are kept separate which sometimes results in unclear boundaries as to whether certain points should be included in the discussion of the real person or either of the corresponding characters. As a result some information on <i>Long Day's Journey</i> is only introduced in the sections on <i>Ah, Wilderness!</i> .
13 / Thesis's contribution to the field	C	The topic has been discussed several times before. Also see point 6.

Comments and Questions for the defense:

1. If possible, try to expand the analysis of Essie Miller in your defense.
2. *Long Day's Journey* was performed and published only after O'Neill's death in 1953. He wanted the publishers to wait for 25 years, but his widow had it published in 1956 when it was also first performed. How might O'Neill's wish for the publication delay (which the dramatist claimed to be self-explanatory) related to the content of the play, and especially its autobiographical elements.
3. The abovementioned play is also widely considered O'Neill's best. Is it the best in your eyes? Why/why not?

In closing:

The thesis is ~~is not~~ recommended for defense.

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

January 11, 2021

Mgr. Šárka Dvořáková
Opponent of the B.A. thesis