



FACULTY OF ARTS  
Charles University

Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

**Posudek vedoucí na bakalářskou práci Ing. Zuzany Holečkové „Major Minor  
Literature: *The Grass Is Singing* and *Disgrace*“**

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Even after the demise of apartheid, the region of Southern Africa continues to be fraught with the consequences of colonial history. Despite the undergoing process of painful reconciliation and despite the optimistic claims of some commentators that this is a region of hope and promise (e.g. a “new” South Africa), the co-habitation of whites and blacks is less that peaceful. In an effort to investigate the situation, both and present, the BA thesis looks towards a comparison of two novels set in the region and dealing with issues relating to the psychological and political consequences of colonialism and racism. The selection of *The Grass Is Singing* (1950) and *Disgrace* (1999) is pertinent and works well. There are enough thematic similarities (e.g. both deal with violence inflicted on a white woman by black men) and differences (in time of publication, the results the violent act produces etc.) that allow a good analysis of the developments during the approximately 50 years that separate the publication of the two texts.

The structure of the thesis is clear. The introduction puts forward the principal theses, then follows a historical overview as a background to the colonial history which shapes profoundly the plots of the novels, and after a brief outline of the theoretical models which are applied the novels themselves are analysed. In my opinion, the only problem is that of proportion, because the space devoted to history is nearly the same as that of the novels’ interpretation. Thus, the survey of the history of the area of Southern Africa (South Africa, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe) goes perhaps too far back in history at the cost of focusing on elements that influenced the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although I understand that Ms Holečková felt the need to explain the peculiar position of Afrikaners. However, for the purposes of the defence, could she very briefly sum up the current political situation? Also, could she explain the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the so-called land question? (By the way, no

amount of detail can contain everything: what e.g. what was the role of the Kingdom of Zululand and the Anglo-Zulu 1879 War in the creation of South Africa?

I appreciate the way Ms Holečková adopts post-colonial theories for her analysis. Her usage of Deleuze and Guattari and the application of concepts of minor literature, deterritorialization and becoming animal work very well. In the process, she also shows the shortcomings of many elements of contemporary post-colonial theory, as some of its beloved tenets, such as diaspora, mimicry, border etc. break down or at least need to be re-negotiated when applied to this regional context.

For me, the most informative and original part is chapter 7 where Ms Holečková traces the fluidity of notions like grace and disgrace, humanity and animality, again via the application of concepts inventively adopted from Deleuze and Guattari.

I would like to hear a clearer explanation of the analogy between Coetzee and the situation of Kafka (page 34). And, regarding the reception of the novels, what is your opinion of the reactions of Athol Fugard and especially that of the African National Congress to *Disgrace* (both page 45). You avoid discussing them (only implicitly in your conclusion to the chapter on page 50).

Overall, the submitted BA thesis is a highly sensible and critically valuable contribution to the study of Anglophone literatures. It certainly fulfills all linguistic, stylistic and scholarly demands for a work on BA level. For these reasons, I recommend the thesis for defence with the preliminary grade of EXCELLENT . **(Doporučuji práci k obhajobě a předběžně navrhuji hodnocení VÝBORNĚ.)**

V Praze dne 9. 6. 2019

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