

### **Mr. Polák's M.A. thesis – review written by the opponent**

Mr. Polák's M.A. thesis, *Wearing the Mask: Performativity in African-American Drama from 1950 to 1970*, is in a way a continuation of his promising B.A. project. It is clearly focused and neatly structured (I particularly liked the fitting titles of the individual chapters), and well-grounded as to the theoretical concepts Mr. Polák is working with. While I certainly appreciate his approach and fully understand that he could not have included everything in the introductory chapter, there are two truly marginal questions I would wish to ask in this respect: 1/ Would he consider lynching as a spectacle as well? 2/ And would the reading of Philip Roth's *Human Stain* complicate at least a little bit his black-and-white handling of the phenomenon of passing?

The actual analysis Mr. Polák is carrying out later is, in my humble opinion, based on a rather conventional choice of primary texts, and seems to be relying, as far as I can tell, on a dichotomy that is really there, but perhaps he could have arrived at more complex conclusions. Therefore, I am presenting the following problems: 1/ Once we consider the intersectional methods, is it possible to see *A Raisin in the Sun* as dealing with the issues of race, class and gender simultaneously? 2/ Is it just symbolism that makes the core of *Dutchman*, and how would the mythological and semiautobiographical interpretations modify Mr. Polák's statements? 3/ And how exactly are the three playwrights briefly mentioned on pp. 87 and 88 overcoming the dualities Mr. Polák is using in his view on the 1950s versus the 1960s? Which is not to suggest that there is no merit in this perspective – just pointing out that it may eventually end up being restrictive and limited.

In conclusion, believing that the role of the opponent is to challenge even the potential weak spots in the argument, I have to admit that Mr. Polák did a very solid job – and perhaps it is my fault that I hoped for a more nuanced and refined text. Having said that, I am proposing the following grade: very good / velmi dobře. As always, though, the final result very much depends on the review written by the supervisor, and even more so on Mr. Polák's performance during the oral defense.

PS I would have preferred to see not so many typos and „howevers“, and I am sure there is no reason for capital letters in „černé minstrelly“ and „afroamerické divadlo“ in the Czech abstract.

Dr. Hana Ulmanová

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