

**OPPONENT'S REPORT
BA THESIS**

**Southern Belle: Grotesque Distortion of Archetype in *Sharp Objects*
Zuzana Šindlerová**

The thesis opens by arguing that “[t]he American South is considered a culturally, socio-politically, and historically distinct region. Many Southerners take great pride in belonging to this specific culture and proudly differentiate themselves from their Northern counterparts” (10); subsequently, Ms. Šindlerová mentions several grounds on which this difference has been established, specifically the climate, the heritage of the plantation system, slavery and patriarchy (manifested particular in the gender mythology of the Southern Belle, the Southern Lady and the Southern Gentleman). The second chapter then introduces the central objective of the thesis; that is, “to discuss how the archetype of Southern Belle becomes grotesquely distorted in *Sharp Objects*” (18). In addition, Ms. Šindlerová considers selected feminist theories as well as definitions of grotesque and gothic fiction. The third chapter then overviews *Sharp Objects*, in detail but unfortunately at times in a manner that is rather descriptive. Finally, the conclusion attempts to relate Flynn's novel to a number of other (for the most part Southern) gothic and grotesque works.

On reading the thesis, I would like to ask Ms. Šindlerová what inspired her to interpret *Sharp Objects* as specifically *Southern* grotesque since with the exception of the setting, there does not seem to be much that relates the story to the realities and the history of the South. Are there any references to slavery and the Civil War, for example? (How) could the novel be discussed outside the framework of the specifically Southern gender mythology?

Second, the thesis somehow fades off, without discussing the relevance of the feminist theories that are outlined briefly in the second chapter for interpreting the novel. Judging from the reviews I've read, there have been debates regarding Flynn's novels' feminism. Would Ms. Šindlerová consider this novel (and other works by this author) feminist and if so, in what sense?

Proposed grade: Dobře (3)

Pavla Veselá, PhD.
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