

Supervisor's Report on a B.A. thesis by

Júlia Leššová

“A Comparative Analysis of the New African-American Narratives and Critical Voices of Toni Morrison, Angela Davis, Al Sharpton, and Patrisse Cullors”

Ms. Júlia Leššová essays in her wide-ranging thesis to show how the Civil Rights movement in the USA continues down to the present day. Her 53-page document contains five main parts and multiple subunits of composition: “1 Introduction: Activism and the Image of Inferiority, 2 The Original Movement: Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s to 1968, 2.1 The Case of Martin Luther King Jr., 2.2 The Case of James Baldwin, 2.3 The Case of Malcolm X, 3 The End of an Era and the New Movement: From 1970 to Present, 3.1 Literature as Activism in the New Movement, 3.1.1 The Case of Toni Morrison, 3.1.2 The Case of Angela Davis, 4 Action as Activism in the New Movement, 4.1 The Case of Al Sharpton, 4.2 The Case of Patrisse Cullors, 5 Conclusion, Bibliography”.

In general, the thesis is well written. However, there are a few glitches in style or for this reader minor issues in formatting. These include the following matters: “it is no surprising” (10) should be “it is not surprising” (10); “*Oxford English Dictionary*’s” (30) should be “*Oxford English Dictionary*’s” (30); “on the lives of African Americans” (34) should be “on the lives of African Americans” (34); there are formatting issues before “Considering all this” (32) “In her Nobel lecture” (34), “In Sharpton’s words” (41), “According to Gynn” (45); “The fight, however, is still not over” (47); “Since it were” (38) should be “Since it was” (38); “same as King” (42) should be “like King” (42), “same as Davis” (45) should be “like Davis” (45), and “similarly to Davis” (45) should be “like Davis” (45).

The abstract of the thesis well encapsulates the theme, to wit,

The struggle against racism is as old as the United States itself. Although the Civil Rights movement accomplished a significant transformation of the social and political system, it left many things unresolved. For this reason, the main argument of this thesis is that the movement did not really end in the 1960s but still continues to this day. The method used is that of comparison, where I compare the present “new” movement, which spans from the 1970s, with the original one (5).

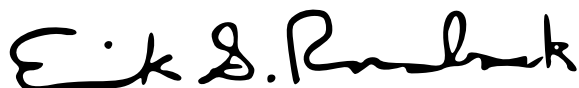
In addition, we learn that “the thesis’s primary focus will be on the comparison of the two stages of the movement that have fought against the image of the inferiority of African American citizens. The first stage being the original Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and the second stage the “new” movement, which started at the end of the 1960s after the death of Martin Luther King Jr” (13).

The Marxist perspective adopted by Angela Davis and Patrisse Cullors begs the question of a US American Marxism and how that tradition or lack thereof informs the American experience of racism. Question 1: Could the candidate elaborate upon this matter in a bit more detail than was covered in the thesis? For example, the candidate does state this: “The anticapitalist approach is also the main reason for the often-negative attitude not only to Davis and Cullors but also to the Black Lives Matter movement itself. Cullors, same as [sic

like] Davis, is openly Marxist and, therefore, similarly to [sic like] Davis, she favors the utopic portrayals of society without racism and discrimination, which those theories provide” (45). And yet one wishes for a bit more development of the analysis here.

Second and last question on James Baldwin, about whom we read, “His activism comes from the fact that he was the author of everyone, criticizing racism along with its history and its effects on people” (20). We also learn, “He was a colorful persona. Douglas Field, in his biography of James Baldwin, described him as follows; “He was, as he knew only too well, many things to many people. Or, as he wrote in *No Name in the Street*, ‘what in the world was I by now but an ageing, lonely, sexually dubious, politically outrageous, unspeakably erratic freak?’[fn.1]” (21). This leads me to the question of whether the problem of one’s singularity is the deeper issue that needs to be further refined in more universalizable way in the American landscape and if so how can we connect these various forms of struggle accordingly?

In light of the foregoing mentions, I hereby recommend the pre thesis defense mark between a 1 (výborně) and a 2 (velmi dobře) for the thesis work. The *viva voce* will determine the final outcome.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Erik S. Roraback". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'E' and 'R'.

doc. Erik S. Roraback, D.Phil. (Oxon.)
22 August 2022