

**Supervisor's Report**  
**on the Doctoral Thesis of**  
**Ms. Mgr. Dagmar Pegues:**

**“Contemporary Revaluation of  
Southern Local Color Fiction”**

**Ms. Dagmar Pegues** essays to illumine certain aesthetic properties and aesthetic strategies of both the genre and of the movement of “Southern Local Color Fiction” in her dissertational treatment of the topic area via a multipronged approach that attempts to build on the insights of gender-based critics. In so doing, Ms. Pegues does not so much argue that the gender-critics are out-and-out essentialistically, or mono-causally wrong or some such submission about a certain sectorally invested if not tendential or even overly narrow minded approach, as that she wishes to reclaim the category of ‘race’ in applying regional aesthetics to the genre of local color fiction, and thereby by extension through this critical recovery to re-assess the rôle of racial stereotypes within the dynamic of the politics of individual and of regional identity. Ms. Pegues does the aforesaid with the aid preeminently of postcolonial theory (via the mediatorial agents of texts by Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, and Edward Said) albeit she does show a cognizance of the materialist aesthetics of Pierre Bourdieu, inter alia.

The 59,708 word / 228-page thesis-text contains seven primary component parts:

- an ‘Introduction’,
- an account of ‘Theories of Difference: Revaluation of Southern Local Color Fiction’,
- an account of a ‘Reinterpretation of the Tragic Mulatta Stereotype in the Fiction of Kate Chopin and Grace King: Gender as Seen through Region and Race’,
- a ‘Reinterpretation of the Mammy Stereotype in the Fiction of Kate Chopin and Grace King: the Limits of Black Sexuality and Tragic Motherhood’,
- a ‘Conclusion’;
- a 9-page Summary in Czech and
- a 10-page Bibliography.

As for the prose style, the thesis is generally well written, though there are a few lapses or typos. Here are some examples from the thesis-work:

- 1) ‘of re-viewing of the tradition’ (25) should be , ‘of a re-viewing of the tradition’
- 2) ‘of multiplicity of cultures’ (26) reads better as , ‘of a multiplicity of cultures’
- 3) ‘Fanon, Franz’ (223) requires ‘Fanon, Frantz’

The bulk of this doctoral thesis, nevertheless, remains a pleasure to read, and is very well written in a dense style that is generally as lucid as it is substantial, perceptive and well-researched. The dearth of references to Czech scholars in her dissertation derives from the social and academic fact that there are to our joint knowledge no such printed studies that address her precise subject area; they rather concern other decades or national-cultural literatures.

As for the overall strategic lines of argumentation of the piece I would ask the candidate

- 1) what other sorts of lines of critical approach does she feel her topic area still deserves as

possible critical apparatuses to throw yet more valuable light on her subject for future exertions in her subject area, and why? For example, 2) what of the social factor of the economic (of the power of capital and the idea of power in the phenomenon of her thesis subject area) and what therefore of interesting work done on the idea of capital by Bourdieu, by Fredric Jameson, inter alia? Obviously one cannot do everything in the space and time of a thesis, but some sort of self-reflexivity would be appreciated in this regard. The necessary linguistic evil for example that comes from the economic could be addressed more forcefully.

Further than this, 3) what sorts of other key if not absurdly-ignored-hitherto-questions in the field do Chopin's and King's work in language pose beyond those elucidated in the pages of the thesis-work? For example, 4) could one 're-imagine' afresh the politics of national identity through the prism of the regional aesthetics of literary works of a local-color-fiction-stripe such as those authored by Chopin and King? Also, 5) what kind of logical distinction would the candidate make between the category of 'local color fiction' and that of 'regional fiction'? This remains unclear to me at the end of the thesis.

Last not least it is my pleasure, as an individual scholar (who has taught fiction by Kate Chopin, and critical matter on her novel work *The Awakening* from 1997 to the present to survey students at FFUK at Prague) to recommend that Ms. Dagmar Pegues be granted the right to defend her thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy based on work contained in this academic product: she is to be commended for her noble efforts in producing such a weighty, wide-ranging, and discursive piece.



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