

Michaela Plicková's B.A. thesis – review written by the opponent

Ms. Plicková's B.A thesis, devoted to the work of Willa Cather and discussing her portrayal of minorities, works with truly contemporary scholarship in the field. Ms. Plicková does not seem to have a single problem with demanding theoretical secondary sources of her choice (Butler, Foucault, Žižek, etc.), and applies them meaningfully on the primary literature. Her thesis is carefully structured, and there are always proper links established not only in between the individual works of Willa Cather, but also in between the concepts Ms. Plicková is investigating.

Her main argument is very developed and precise, leading in the desired direction. Given the fact that the role of the opponent is to find real or potential weak spots, though, I have to admit that I was troubled by the term „a queer self-hood“ on p. 12 – while Ms. Plicková seems to be investigating that notion mainly in chapter 4.2, I wonder whether this is her own term (and if so, how would she define it), or whether it is taken from somewhere (and if so, where exactly can it be found). Then, I was not sure about the logic on p. 26, starting with the expression „secondly“, and the same is true as to p. 43, starting with the expression „On the other hand“ – could Ms. Plicková clarify her line of thought during the oral defense? On p. 26, then, I was puzzled by the verb „mirrors“ („the idyllic settings... mirrors with her confession“) – in what sense is it being used here? And last but not least, I was not persuaded by her discussion of Toni Morrison's analysis on p. 13 – in my opinion, it is way too sketchy, relying on the tricky word „presumably“ – is there any evidence, preferably textual, for Ms. Plicková's challenging attitude? (And a truly minor remark: the word order in note 75 on p. 47 simply does not work.)

Finally, I also have to point out that while Ms. Plicková's English is almost flawless, this is not the case with her Czech abstract. Next to some misprints, she uses the term „Americký národ“ as well as „americká společnost“ (she should have been consistent, and I also think that it would be hard to argue for a capital letter here), and she uses the adjective „upozadňovaný“, too (which could have been replaced by a genuinely Czech expression).

All these are, however, minor remarks and reservations. I have to stress that in my opinion, this thesis is, without any doubt, an excellent one, and look forward to the review written by the supervisor and to Ms. Plicková's performance during the oral defense.

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Dr. Hana Ulmanová