Ms. Vlková’s B.A. thesis is devoted to the analysis of the images of the city in Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s work. As a primary source, she chose New & Selected Poems 1955 – 1993, a volume she is ascribing two different years of publication to (1993 on p. 10 and 1994 later). While this is not a huge problem, I believe she could have justified her choice: does she see this volume as a representative sample of Ferlinghetti’s poetry in so far as what it includes, and is it therefore possible, on the basis of those poems, to trace certain trends or tendencies as to both formal and thematic development as to the images of the city? Was it actually her aim to do so, and if not, what was actually the aim of the whole analysis?

Having said that, I think that Ms. Vlková is making lots of valid and thoughtful points as to the images of the city in Ferlinghetti’s poetry, and provides the reader with excellent examples/quotes, but I am not quite sure what is the main direction of her argument. At the end of each chapter, she sums up what it is she came up with (e.g. on p. 44, she actually draws some conclusion as to Ferlinghetti’s European cities), but her actual Conclusion reads like her abstract and/or her introduction: it is way too general and vague. Could she specify what exactly did she find out during her research and analysis at least during the oral defense? What could have been helpful in that respect, in my opinion, is a sub-division of the main chapters: this would have enabled her, together with a clearly defined aim, to organize her analysis, to establish closer links between the individual observations, etc. E.g. chapter 2 could have been subdivided into individual and collective memory, and then even further, discussing e.g. both spatial and temporal distance, river, etc.

As to some minor points, on p. 21 Ms. Vlková comments on Ferlinghetti’s Love in the Days of Rage, but there is no note or bibliographical reference, and it is unclear whether this is her own observation or not. On p. 41, I was puzzled by the verb “pupated” – could she explain its meaning, and where is it taken from? On p. 50, she writes „a multitude of signs of ill omen“ – is this actually a term, and is it not slightly redundant? And finally on p. 54, she talks about the positive aspects of the country, including „a lawn among trees where a yogi gives lecture about the interconnectedness of all beings“ – and I just wonder whether she would allow for some irony in that passage as well.

This being the case, my preliminary suggestion for the grade is very good (velmi dobře), but, as always, the actual grade will also depend on the review written by the supervisor and mainly on Ms. Vlková’s performance during the oral defense.

Prague, June 6, 2012

Dr. Hana Ulmanová