

MICHAELA PLICKOVÁ'S M.A. THESIS – REVIEW WRITTEN BY THE SUPERVISOR

Ms. Plicková's M.A. thesis, **The Quest for Identity withing the Reality of Plantation Memory in Eudora Welty's Short Fiction**, is an extremely precise, detailed, in-depth and clearly structured project. It discusses Eudora Welty's short fiction and the author's engagement with the plantation memory, i.e. with one of the key and rather recent concepts used in New Southern Studies. Given the interdisciplinary nature of New Southern Studies, Ms. Plicková's M.A. thesis is also interdisciplinary, and examines the processes in which the particular selves, i.e. the characters from Eudora Welty's selected short stories, are confronted with the plantation order.

While in chapter 1, Ms. Plicková discusses the concepts of a binary, normativity and otherness – in so far as she needs them for the subsequent close reading of the selected stories –, in chapter 2, she moves on to the more complicated notions of the constructed nature of social status and change of paradigm. Her effort to illustrate the development of Eudora Welty's given characters then culminates in chapter 3; in that particular section, she is dealing with the shifting forces and – finally – triumphant self-assertion. Therefore, my only marginal question concerns chronology: does Ms. Plicková believe that the gradual changes in the depiction of the actual characters have anything to do with the order in which the individual stories were written, and if so, what does that say about the role of plantation memory in Eudora Welty's oeuvre?

As to the actual thesis, I feel I have nothing to comment on. Therefore, I would just wish to ask whether Ms. Plicková knows how much has been done regarding plantation memory and other Southern writers, and what are some of the preliminary conclusions drawn from those studies suggesting. E.g., is the plantation memory weakening once we start analyzing the works of writers belonging to the second, resp. third wave of Southern renaissance? Or, does it seem that the plantation memory is more vivid once it comes to female, or even non-white, authors? And if so, what might be some of the reasons for that?

Having said that, I am eagerly waiting for prof. Matthews's report, since he is a pioneering figure and a real expert in this still emerging field. Thus, his questions and remarks will be extremely valuable, and I would want Ms. Plicková to start answering those first, if possible.

I firmly believe that Ms. Plicková deserves the grade „výborně“/“excellent“. In addition to that, I am persuaded that her thesis might deserve our Mathesius Prize. The final result, though, depends on the review written by the opponent and on Ms. Plicková's performance during the oral defense, as well as on the quality of all the other theses defended at our department this academic year.

Prague, May 18, 2015

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