

## Lucie Halášková's M.A. thesis – review written by the opponent

Ms. Halášková's M.A. thesis, **Modernity and the Changing American South: Alienation in Selected Fiction by Flannery O'Connor and Eudora Welty**, is an ambitious piece of scholarship. It makes excellent use of Jean Baudrillard's *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, as well as of the concept of othering/otherness; here, my only reservation is that Ms. Halášková could have been more nuanced in her interpretations, as there are, in my opinion, different degrees of otherness (see e.g. p. 21, where „the Negro's eyes“ are evidently included, or p. 71, where Livvie is clearly the other, based on her gender). Thus, Ms. Halášková managed to reach her aim; that is, textually, with numerous references to the given works, supported her claim that the American South is/was indeed changing, and that the main result of modernity, even though there is a double-edge to it (see the improving position of African Americans), is without any doubt alienation.

Ms. Halášková is able to write with a deep theoretical insight, is always focused and almost flawlessly precise; my only regret is that she did not divide the main analytical chapters into subchapters, as that would make the reading for the next generation of students easier. Her English is, in my opinion, close to perfect; the only term I was not sure about is „foreign internationals“ (p.16), but that may very well be a problem of my own. Would Ms. Halášková kindly elucidate the meaning of this term during the defense for me, and is it a term that is generally accepted, or is it her original coinage?

As I have stated above, the analysis itself is very intelligent and persuasive; yet, there are a few points Ms. Halášková could have raised in her conclusion. For example, I would very much like to know how would she assess her own contribution to the existing scholarship, I would want her to justify the choice of her primary material, and I also wonder what would she suggest as to possible further research in the given area. And last but not least, she could have stated explicitly whether she is intentionally working with the concept of New Southern Studies or not; there are a few hints (e.g. on p. 15, or p. 63), but not a consistent argument.

Unfortunately, there are some formal problems as well. There is no abstract, neither in Czech, nor in English; it is my firm belief that both are a must at this level. The Czech title of the thesis is, in my opinion, rather clumsy: not knowing the context, what does „ve výběru literatury Flannery O'Connor a Eudora Welty“ exactly mean? And finally, I think it is rather helpful to divide Works Cited into primary and secondary sources.

This being the case, I am suggesting the following grade: „výborně/excellent“ or „velmi dobře/very good“. The final result, though, depends on Ms. Halášková's performance during the oral defense, as well as on the review written by the supervisor.

Prague, August 20, 2015

Dr. Hana Ulmanová, M.A.