

Supervisor's report on M.A. thesis by

Lucie Halašková

**“Modernity and the Changing American South: Alienation in Selected Fiction by Flannery O’Connor and Eudora Welty”**

Ms. Lucie Halašková purveys in her thesis work the concepts of alienation and consumerism in fiction by Flannery O’Connor and Eudora Welty. The thesis contains 77 pp. across some preliminary matter, five chapters, and a bibliography. As for the prose style, it reads uncommonly well and displays an ability too to retain her own critical voice amidst the din of the body of criticism that she does pursue.

Content-wise, this reader appreciated the rigorous use of close reading of the target cultural objects, and also its perceptive general observations. For example, there is a fine discussion of the spectacle society in which we read of the “commodity culture as a system which is by definition inclusive and undiscerning” (12) and of how this also leads to a “celebration of superficiality and appearances” (14), which in turn gives rise later on in the thesis to a strong reading of commodity fetishism (33) and also to such notions as “the capitalist credo of narcissism and entitlement” (44). The local critiques of individual prose texts are well conceived and well argued and the use of such theorists as Jean Baudrillard on commodity culture apt and incisive.

**First question:** does your critical analysis of O’Connor and Welty suggest if not offer ways out of the deadlocks and ambiguities regarding angles of vision toward alienation and consumerism and the appearance and image obsessed sensibility that constructs? **Second question:** In the light of your analyses, can you please clarify a bit more in what ways is the religious function today occupied by shopping and the commodity form? **Third question:** is there a sense in which the sacrifice of “substance and content in favor of salability” causes a certain kind of loss of meaning and value in the artistic worlds that O’Connor and Welty construct?

In light of the foregoing mentions, I hereby recommend the pre thesis defense mark of between a 1 (výborně) for the thesis work.

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28 August 2015.