

Supervisor's Report on M.A. thesis by

Ms. Petra Landerová

## **THE FEMALE BODY AND VOICE IN U.S. PROSE FICTION**

Ms. Petra Landerová sets out to explore in her thesis work facets of the female body and voice as embodied in a select band of high canonic works in U.S. prose fiction. The thesis contains 84 pp. across some preliminary matter, four chapters, and a works cited section. The thesis is written with a certain elegance and élan, and is well nigh spotless with regard to any errors of composition.

The key fictional objects of focus, all of which are striking examples for her chosen field of inquiry, are as follows: Henry James's *Washington Square*, Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, Flannery O'Connor's "Good Country People", Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, and Kathy Acker's *Blood and Guts in High School*. The longer-view nature and picture of the investigation gives an impressive scope and scale to its critical conclusions.

All in all, this reader appreciated the wide-ranging nature of the fictional texts under its critical purview with the concomitant use of sophisticated theoretical resources that contribute to excellent close readings of the target cultural documents. A band of apt critical texts fills out this critical strategy. The thesis persuasively uses the theoretical writings of the leading edge French feminist and psychoanalytic thinkers Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva to throw valuable light on the candidate's thematic focus and conceptual concerns. Theoretical problems are thus broached, as well as societal, historical and political ones that come in the train of the theory deployed, and in the light of the conditions and contexts of the fictional writing assessed.

At this stage, I would **first** ask the candidate to outline any of her own self-problematizations regarding her research results, however cogent and compelling her findings may be? Also and so **second**, what are one or more of the key and maybe even unanswerable questions that the candidate's cultural analysis gives us to think about the double problem of the female body and voice in the present analysis of prose texts? For example, does the candidate think that in fictional representations, a female subject's body, deeds, projects, and voice may promote a radical emancipatory potential and/or politics that would vanquish states of domination?

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

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