Michaela Piňosová’s M.A. thesis, Unbinding the Female Prometheus: L’Écriture feminine in Selected Poetry of Sylvia Plath, is a fine piece of scholarship, focusing on the language and its development in Sylvia Plath’s poetry, and thus wisely supported by the theories of contemporary feminist critics, namely the notion of l’écriture féminine. Ms. Piňosová’s bibliography is truly impressive, and all the necessary titles aptly chosen. Knowing that no single list of secondary sources can be complete, I am tempted to suggest one addition, though: namely Judith Butler. Has Ms. Piňosová considered her at some stage in her research, and if so, could she please list the reasons why she at some point decided to drop her?

The whole thesis is persuasively and neatly structured, clearly organized into concise chapters. A minor observation, though: is Ms. Piňosová aware of the fact that their titles refer to Philip Roth’s famous novels, and that this writer has been frequently criticized as a “Jewish chauvinist pig”? And if so, was it a part of her plan? And could Ms. Piňosová possibly expand on her conclusion at least orally and explicitly tell us what she thinks her main contribution is (that is, whose texts have helped her most and why, and which authorities, on the other hand, is she having discussions with)?

As to Ms. Piňosová’s language and style, her English is way above the average expected at this level. She is extremely precise, analytical and insightful in her observations, applying complex theoretical approaches in a lucid manner. I only believe that she should have tried and got rid of the redundant (and sometimes even confusing –see e.g. p. 17) “howevers”, and she might have been more careful using the terms “the branch American women’s poetry” (in the Abstract), “žánr americké ženské poezie” (in the Czech version of the Abstract), and “a genre of writing” (p.11). Is it indeed genre she is dealing with, and if so, how would she define it?

My last question, I admit, has nothing to do with the thesis itself, and I am posing it just out of curiosity. I suppose Ms. Piňosová has read Sylvia Plath’s poems in Czech translations as well, and I just wonder whether they, in her opinion, also reflect the development in Sylvia Plath’s poetry – namely the trends Ms. Piňosová commented upon. Could I ask for a brief response?

This being the case, I am suggesting the following grade: “excellent”/”výborně”. Moreover, I firmly believe that Ms. Piňosová’s M.A. thesis could be considered for our annual Mathesius award. The final result, though, also depends on the review written by the supervisor, and on Ms. Piňosová’s performance during the oral defense. And, of course, on the quality of other theses submitted this academic year.

Prague, Aug 15, 2017

Dr. Hana Ulmanová