As far as I can judge given my relative lack of familiarity with early-American political pamphlets and documents, Bc. Čabartová’s “The Concept of Property in the Context of Early American Political Writing” is marred not only by language and stylistic errors but also by superficial readings of the works she discusses as representative of “early American literature.” The errors are not minor, e.g. “fylozofů” and “fylozofickému” in the Czech abstract, basic errors in English such as “a man's money” (14), “they are in the right” (42) and “start loosing their rhetorical effect” (43) as well as incomplete references in the footnotes and the recklessly formatted Bibliography.

The objective of the thesis to “understand the American approach to property” (12) is rather vague in itself and it is unfeasible when the choice of texts is as narrow as it is here. The definition of property in the opening pages is too brief and it does not take into account the difference between private and public property nor does it consider the notion of the common. No other writings besides several texts authored by white Anglo-Saxon males are considered; moreover, these are treated virtually en bloc. Thus “The Declaration of Independence,” “Common Sense,” the Federalist papers, the Anti-Federalist papers and the U.S. Constitution supposedly “all perceive 'property' as an important factor for ensuring the happiness of the people” (15) and Locke, Jefferson, Paine, Madison, Hamilton, Emerson and Thoreau jointly contribute to the “birth of America as a nation reliant on private property” (48). Even Jefferson's substitution of Locke's “property” with “happiness” is dismissed as possibly motivated by “political correctness” (what does Bc. Čabartová mean by “political correctness” in reference to this historical context?). Her conclusion is that “the 'pursuit of happiness' replaces 'the pursuit of property' only on the formal level” (39) and in reality everybody understood happiness to mean property. Then, in the final leap to the present, Bc. Čabartová links these “early-American writings” with the ills of the U.S. during the Trump era, notably the gap between the rich and the poor, the crumbling health system, environmental destruction, etc.

My questions should be clear by now: does Bc. Čabartová see any substantial differences in the ways the above-mentioned and other “early-American authors” think about property? Isn't there a difference between the work of Jefferson and Hamilton? Thoreau and Trump? Do any of these thinkers operate with the distinction private vs. public property or with the notion of the common? The conclusion stresses the need for the U.S. to find a way out of the present dystopian situation but isn't there any history of oppositional thought to build on? For example, critics such as Betsy Erkkila emphasized the “radicalism of Jefferson's thought”; Michael Hardt has argued that the basis of Jefferson's understanding of equality is the common. Both critics are in their ways aware of the fundamental contradictions in Jefferson's life and work but neither is ready to dismiss him. How would Bc. Čabartová respond to these propositions?

In my view the thesis may be graded “dobře” but it would benefit from further proofreading and a more careful consideration of its central argument.

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