

Petra Hadlová's B. A. thesis – report written by the supervisor

Ms. Hadlová's B. A. thesis **Chaim Potok's Selected Characters and Their Resistance towards Assimilation** is a clearly structured work on a phenomenon that has been already sufficiently analyzed in many different areas. Thus, logically, it is an interdisciplinary study which tends to be somewhat descriptive – it finds evidence for the sociological etc. claims in the selected novels by the selected writer. While that is certainly enough for a B. A. thesis, and the textual examples are adequate and relevant, I wonder whether Ms. Hadlová could not have developed an argument as to how literary works may – or may not – reflect reality. She mentions semiautobiographical features of the given primary material, but maybe she could have gone further than that and briefly discuss the whole issue in its complexity, as well as the way she decided to treat it. Could she do that at least during the oral defense?

In that connection, it might be fruitful to consider gender as well. Ms. Hadlová's selected characters are all males, but I suspect that a different picture might have emerged had she mentioned female characters as well, created by female writers (e.g. Yezierska). Thus, I believe it would have been more appropriate to say „sons“, not „children“ (see p. 19, 26, 34, etc.). Again, I would want Ms. Hadlová to comment on this aspect during the oral defense.

Having stated what I find missing, I must stress that Ms. Hadlová's thesis is otherwise precise, focused and persuasive. Her central argument is fluent, supported by authoritative secondary sources, and very rarely is there a minor flaw in logic (see e.g. p. 43, „Provided the fact“ – how so?, or p. 44 with the redundant „however“). That has to do, I think, with Ms. Hadlová's writing skills or lack of attention, not the argument itself.

Finally, I have to say that I do not understand the logic of having both „Table of Contents“ (p. 8) and „Contents“ (p. 53); moreover, they are not identical. Plus, there are a few errors in punctuation in the Czech abstract (regarding either missing or redundant commas), as well as a misleading turn of the phrase (instead of „na rozdíl od jiných židovských spisovatelů“, it should have been rather „jiných kanonických amerických židovských spisovatelů“). This being the case, I am suggesting the following grade: velmi dobře/very good, but the final result depends on Ms. Hadlová's performance during the oral defense and on the report written by the opponent.

Prague, January 6, 2015

Dr. Hana Ulmanová