

Alena Zelenková, *Judith Butler's Concept of Performative Gender and the Rebellion Against Normativity: Sandra Cisneros's Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*
Supervisor's Report

This BA thesis combines an advanced theoretical discussion of Judith Butler's work, which goes far beyond the problems discussed in the specialized MA courses, with a penetrating and partially innovative interpretation of Sandra Cisneros's short stories, which are foundational works of the Chicana literary movement.

Since the author's interest was primarily theoretical, the problem of "gender performance" in Butler is given much greater attention than the works by Cisneros. The theoretical discussion is only partially geared to the literary analysis and interpretation. Instead of the problems of citationality and the discursive construction of gender and sex, Cisneros's major topic is the breaking of the power of stereotypes (existing in religion, modern commercial culture - e.g., telenovelas - and everyday life). To explain this power, the analysis should be expanded into Lacanian psychoanalysis (especially "imaginary identification" and "mirror-stage identification") discussed further in Bhabha's *Location of Culture* and – as "phantasmatic identification" - in Slavoj Žižek's *Sublime Object of Ideology*. In other words, the analysis of Irigaray's critique of the Lacanian imaginary should be related to other theoretical discussions approaching Lacan from the postcolonial or posttotalitarian perspective, or even from Butler's own position (her discussion of Žižek in *Bodies That Matter*). On the other hand, I have to admit that employing Butler's later work, especially *Antigone's Claim*, the author does more justice to her literary topic, although she should be more sensitive to the differences between the ambivalences of an ancient myth and of modern stereotypes at different cultural levels.

On the whole, the thesis can be seen as a well-articulated attempt to apply a complex theoretical approach to the interdisciplinary analysis of multicultural writing. I hope that in future the author will be able to expand her approach not only to the whole area of Chicana literature but also to other instances of ideological construction of identities. For this purpose, a deeper study of Foucault's concepts of discourse and archive should be necessary, and also a deeper reflection of the differences between Derridean, Foucauldian and Lacanian (Žižekian) features of Butler's approach. Moreover, examples of gender problems in other multicultural environments (especially diasporas) should be studied to test the effectivity and truth-value of the outlined approach.

Despite these reservations, the work by far exceeds the standard of and requirements for BA theses and displays some features of best MA theses defended at our department. Therefore I recommend it for the defence and propose the grade "výborně."

Prague, 29 August 2014

prof. PhDr. Martin Procházka, CSc.