

Markéta Soukupová's B.A. thesis / review written by the supervisor

Ms. Soukupová's B.A. thesis, *Neither Old, Nor New: The Southern Belle Archetype in Lillian Hellman's Birdie from The Little Foxes and Tennessee Williams's Blanche from A Streetcar Named Desire*, is a solid attempt to trace the origin and the subsequent development of one of the key American cultural – as well as literary – concepts. Both the focus and the structure are clear, and the main argument rather persuasive. It occasionally suffers, though, from lack of precision, and therefore, I have to ask some questions.

Is it really “the second decade of the twentieth century” that Ms. Soukupová has in mind on p. 16, and if so, why? In what sense is Margaret Mitchell a “modern Southern writer”, and is the adjective “modern” used as a term (p. 25)? Is the character of Blanche truly a “satire on the Old South values” (p. 49), and do both Birdie and Blanche search for “authenticity” (p. 34)? And could Ms. Soukupová develop her analysis of Blanche via Butler (p. 53) a bit further, please?

The second group of critical comments and reservations has to do with Ms. Soukupová's writing skills. For the most telling example of clumsiness, see e.g. the final paragraph on p. 54 – both syntax and vocabulary call for a huge improvement, as we need a text that is absolutely fluent and not even a bit confusing. At some places, one may not understand what it is that Ms. Soukupová exactly meant (see p. 26 – “against the social quota”), while other passages betray Ms. Soukupová's native tongue (p. 25 – “for the price of individuality”). This is to suggest that Ms. Soukupová should still work on her English, and also proofread more carefully.

Last but not least, I feel obliged to point out that there are still a few misprints left (see e.g. p. 13, “of” instead of “on”, p. 55, “William's” instead of “Williams's”, p. 57 “Feminst” instead of “Feminist”, etc.). Also, as to the abstract written in Czech, I believe that Ms. Soukupová should have used the female surname ending “-ová” in a consistent fashion (why “de Beauvoir”, but “Butlerová”,), and should have thought twice about the exact meaning of the verb “ztotožňovat”.

Finally, I have to say that even though Ms. Soukupová's knowledge of secondary literature is impressive, it is not always applied that reasonably, as she from time to time tends to connect too many thoughts at once, with no clear logic involved – see e.g. p. 23. However, the final, i.e. submitted, version of her thesis is a clear sign of progress from the drafts. This being the case, I am suggesting the following grade: either *velmi dobře*/very good, or *dobře*/good. The final result in this particular case depends very much on the review written by the opponent, as Dr. Veselá will be able to read and judge this work more objectively, and also on Ms. Soukupová's performance during the oral defense.

Prague, Aug 25, 2016

Dr. Hana Ulmanová, M.A.