

Opponent's Report on Ms. Barbora Libovická's Diploma Thesis

"No Pain, No Gain: A Study in Narratives of Suffering: Kaye Gibbons's *Ellen Foster* & Lauren Slater's *Lying*"

Barbora Libovická's thesis traces some of the main features in two postmodern novels, as abovementioned in the title of the work, to gain purchase and to illuminate the concept of suffering. Her 108 page study contains four parts plus the requisite Resumé and Bibliography.

As regards the stylistic errors I should point out the following: "onto" should be "on to" (5), "similarly to" should read "just as" (31), "same as it supports" should say "just as it supports" (34), "similar function" (35) needs an "a" before it, "similarly in the extracts" should be "as in the extracts" (37), "same as the" should read "just as the" (40), "aged so quickly" should say "age so quickly" (40), "remind that" should be "remind one" (42), "fist" should read "first" (43), and "similarly to" should be "like" (68).

Over-all, the thesis is composed on a very good level, but there is sometimes a top-heavy wayward quality to the logic of development of the prose that can be incongruous with the aim for lucidity in homing in on the topic area. Also, formally and so organizationally there is a sense sometimes in which one is caught in the labyrinth and one would like to know where one has been and where one is going. For example, it would be a more fluid reading encounter if the conclusion worked in greater tandem with the introduction.

Nevertheless, the work contains much fine work with some rich references. **My chief question would be for the candidate to re-state the over-all concern and thesis argued for here.** The text shows a good deal of pure work and thought that might have been better illumined in a more direct and simple way. To be sure, the argument of the text is hard to follow sometimes, not least

because it can be more descriptive than analytical, causing some incongruity between argumentative intention and effect. So again, for clarity's sake, would the candidate have any response to the foregoing so as to firm up the basis thesis of the piece?

As concerns the leading strengths of the writing I should spotlight the sheer bulk of close reading done on the two novels, which is convincing enough; yet, the use of theory might have been more compellingly used for this reader, albeit again the conceptual intersection between empirical research (textual analysis) and speculative reasoning (interdisciplinarity) contains some perceptive work worthy of note.

Recommended pre-exam mark: velmi dobře

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Erik S. Roraback". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "E".

Erik S. Roraback, D.Phil.