

**Posudek oponenta disertační práce Mgr. et Mgr. Terezy Jiroutové Kynčlové
“Chicana Literature: A Feminist Perspective of Gloria Anzaldúa's Identity Politics”
předkládané v roce 2017 na Ústavu anglofonních literatur a kultur**

The dissertation opens with a personal prologue in which the candidate positions herself in relation to the subject matter; her acknowledgment of privilege here is not an empty gesture given the subsequent emphasis on situated knowledge. The introductory chapter, besides offering an overview of the entire work, highlights its interdisciplinary character and summarizes two major points, namely that there exist “affirmative contemplations of the Mexico-U.S. border as a phenomenon generating not only differences and hierarchies, but also new cultures and identities” (12) and that Gloria Anzaldúa's oeuvre serves as exemplary in this context. The following five chapters successfully demonstrate these points.

In the first chapter, Mgr. et Mgr. Jiroutová Kynčlová reviews the history of the Chicano movement and Chicana's opposition to its patriarchal nature. She considers the anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga, as representative of this criticism. Just as in the remainder of the dissertation, her points here are forcefully argued, although they may be somewhat generalizing. Reading assertions such as “feminism allows Chicanas to probe much deeper into the social structures and makes it possible for them to expose the systemic oppression of women as women in general, whereas male proponents of the Chicano Movement remain limited in their views” (43) or “[u]nlike Chicanas though, by no means do Chicanos undermine the privileges stemming from their heterosexual masculinity or question the hierarchical nature of gendered relationships and the traditional division of gender roles in both the private and the public spheres, let alone the power differentials present in them as a result” (43-44), I wonder if there are no gender-sensitive Chicanos. Later on (in the second chapter), gay men appear as an exception, but are there really no heterosexual Chicano feminists? Has the movement been so uniform in its treatment of gender?

The second chapter intends to offer “a gender-sensitive close reading of the principal text of Chicana/o canon 'Yo Soy Joaquín' and some postcolonial interpretations of the concept of Aztlán, thereby also pointing out the profound differences between Chicana feminist writing and Chicano letters” (21). Once again, the point is strongly argued, with much secondary literature cited for support. The reading of the poem—as well as of all the poetry in the dissertation—is distant rather than close, which is a legitimate methodological choice, although there could have been further points made had the poetry been analyzed closely. For example, given the candidate's emphasis on mestiza consciousness, the interaction of Spanish and English could have been discussed; lines such as “[t]o survive the Borderlands / you must live *sin fronteras* / be a crossroads” from Anzaldúa's poem, which the candidate cites (110), play with different meanings of the word “sin” in the two languages. Elaborating on such and other nuances of poetry could have enriched the dissertation.

Chapters three and four delve deeper into issues introduced in the preceding pages (Chicano nationalism, the status of Aztlán, the role of the family) but this time the focus is primarily on Anzaldúa's feminist critique. Her queerness, her notion of “new tribalism” and her theory of mestiza consciousness are embraced as subversive of Chicano nationalism. The fifth chapter then begins with a critique of Mel Gibson's *Apocalypto* but the candidate above all discusses how Chicanas reinterpret three archetypal figures: La Malinche, La Virgen de Guadalupe and La Llorona. This chapter is strong in its review of the myths but it could have offered more concrete examples of their rewriting; for example, Cisneros's “Woman Hollering Creek” is briefly mentioned but several other stories in the collection *Woman Hollering Creek* feature the three archetypal women. Stories such as “Little Miracles, Kept Promises” could have been discussed as well.

A minor point about the conclusion: while I share the hope that the repression of the U.S.-Mexico border region will not progressively worsen, I do not think that Esperanza's name is a good conclusion because she herself does not associate it merely with hope but also with sadness, waiting, a muddy color, etc.

One last question for the entire dissertation: borders here, for understandable reasons, are associated with colonization, expansion and Othering, with violent and oppressive practices that are imposed by one party on another. The fact that they also emerge as “a springboard for a new epistemology” (130) is rather a virtue born out of harsh realities and it cannot serve as a justification for the existence of such borders. Obviously, they should be dismantled. But is this true of borders in general?

Formally, the text is clearly structured and the prose is fluent and sophisticated. There are only a few typos or errors I have noticed (e.g. “Sand Diego” [8], “theory in flesh” [35], “the 'the most potent means'” [45], “positon” [69], “[t]his has lead [...] to the internalized of acceptance of” (88), “making and intervention” [99], “Withes' Blood” [188]). Occasionally, paragraphs are not correctly indented (79, 137, 146, 147, 151) and errors in punctuation are rather frequent (e.g. missing fullstops [17, 47], quotes within quotes [28, 36, 60, 82, 104] and misplaced commas, most commonly before “that” [56, 70, 98, 99, 103, 104] but also elsewhere [70, 74, 86, 149]). To refer to critical analysis as “a minute dissection” (e.g. 21) sounds strange to me and why *The House on Mango Street* is abbreviated as *Mango* is not clear either. But these are minor issues in a well-written text.

To sum up, the dissertation undeniably demonstrates the candidate's familiarity with Chicano/a writing as well as with various related interdisciplinary theories. The critical points raised in this report are intended merely to stimulate discussion. Therefore, in my view, “Chicana Literature: A Feminist Perspective of Gloria Anzaldúa's Identity Politics” may be recommended for defense and awarded a passing grade (“prospěla”).

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