

## Bachelor Thesis Evaluation

Thesis title: Feminism in Women's Canadian Literature in the 1960s and the 1970s

Author: Simona Milotová

Thesis Supervisor: Mgr. Klára Kolinská, M.A., PhD.

External Assessor: Dr. Soňa Nováková, PhD., CSc

### Thesis Supervisor's Evaluation:

Simona Milotová's Bachelor Dissertation addresses a very complex topic the accurate evaluation of which requires taking into consideration the larger – and deeper – historical and cultural context out of which it emerges, and which is manifested in its concrete representations more immediately and evidently than, for example, in European literatures: reflections of feminist ideology and aesthetics in Canadian literature by women produced in the 1960s and 1970s.

The author is well aware of the potential vastness and inner intricacy of the topic and attempts at narrowing it down by the choice of primary texts for closer scrutiny; these are Marian Engel's *Bear*, Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*, Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*, and Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*. These four works of prose fiction belong today among highly acclaimed canonical works of Canadian literature (loose as the definition of the term may be) and represent the first generation of strong and eloquent female voices in the country's fiction. In this regard, they share a common ground in sharing the same (if not identical) perspective and attitude, which can be summed up as the rebellion against male dominance and authority, and the equally pressing need to articulate that individual, as well as social rebellion in artistic terms.

Considering this premise, the author's choice of primary texts is justified, but remains still rather broad, at the expense of more in-depth analysis of their nuances and implications. The plan indicated in the table of contents and introduction, however understandable in itself, thus remains only partially realized, and the discussion does not consistently lead towards fully convincing conclusions.

The structure of the thesis betrays a certain – very understandable – lack of experience; the author quite rightly recognizes the need to introduce the literary analyses by a theoretical introduction, but does not quite manage to keep the two parts in a fully functional proportion:

the theoretical part contains a rather lengthy treatise on the definition and history of feminism which mostly reiterates well-known facts without sufficient contextualization. Instead, more focus on the Canadian situation would have brought about more effective results. Admittedly, however, the author's analysis of the connection between the rise of feminist thought and nationalism in Canada represents one of the strongest parts of the discussion.

What remains rather problematic is the attempt at the definition of "Canadianness" and constitutive features of "Canadian identity," "Canadian culture" and "Canadian Literature". While the author concedes that these are problematic notions to define, her approach appears as hesitant, vague and unconvincing. She is not very far from admitting that these may well be empty, and thus unfunctional categories, but is not consistent enough in her approach to fully challenge them as points of reference around which to structure her argument; this, in my view, can be considered the weakest point of the whole discussion.

Another point could – and should – be made here concerning the language of the dissertation: in spite of the author's sincere work at editing and revising her text problems persist in the final version, namely on the syntactical and stylistic levels, which partially spoil the impression of the argument. The text would benefit from a careful formal revision, ideally consulted with a native speaker.

In view of the comments made above I recommend Simona Milotová's Bachelor Thesis for defence with suggested evaluation of VERY GOOD.

Prague, August 20th, 2019

Mgr. Klára Kolinská, M.A., PhD.