

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT
BA THESIS

Memory and Storytelling in Selected Works of Joy Harjo
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As the title suggests, the thesis focuses on the theme of memory and storytelling in selected works of Joy Harjo. These include above all poetry from the collections *She Had Some Horses* (1983), *In Mad Love and War* (1990), *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky* (1994) and *A Map to the Next World* (2000). "The aim," in the author's own words, "is to point out the importance of remembering and the detrimental effects of forgetting in Harjo's poetry as well as the crucial role of storytelling in ensuring the continuation of one's culture and people" (11).

Following a brief outline of the thesis, the second chapter introduces Harjo's work, with the focus on memory and storytelling. This general frame is eloquently presented and carefully researched as it draws on relevant studies in the field of Native American literature, on critical studies of Harjo's work as well as on Harjo's own essays and criticism. Additional topics raised in this chapter include the political power of poetry, writing and language, music, home and displacement, and the space of academia, among others. In chapters three to six, the theme of memory and storytelling is then explored in detail, with good readings of several poems from the above-mentioned collections. The thrust highlighted throughout in Harjo's poetry is towards reconciliation and healing, without, however, forgetting that "what indigenous peoples have already survived is horrifying and often indescribable" (57) and that "[t]he challenge lies in how to achieve this [healing] with the constant reminder of the suffering already inflicted" (69).

With the above in mind, the defense could perhaps address the problem of historical (in)justice, more generally and as it emerges in Harjo's writing specifically. Also, other themes mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, from the power of poetry to the space of academia, could be briefly elaborated on, with further examples from the poet's oeuvre. Both these are additional rather than critical questions as the thesis, to repeat, is exceptionally well written, clearly formulated and altogether excellent.

Proposed grade: výborně (1)

Pavla Veselá, PhD.
August 19, 2022