

# DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

## INDEPENDENT REPORT FORM

Name of Candidate: Olivia Howe

ID No: \_\_\_\_\_

"Oppression versus Empowerment: A Philosophical Analysis of Female

Title of Thesis: Participation in Sport"

The examiner prepared, on this form and before the oral examination, an independent assessment of the thesis. The assessment has paid due regard to the requirements for the award of the degree, and it also highlights, if any reservations are to be addressed at the oral examination.

EXAMINER: PROFESSOR ANGELA J. SCHNEIDER, Ph.D., Western University, Faculty of Health Sciences, School of Kinesiology, London, Ontario, Canada

### ASSESSMENT

#### Independent assessment of the thesis:

I found this to be an interesting, well researched and well presented thesis.

The thesis contains original contributions to the field. In particular, the utilization of the Feminist Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir with regard to female participation in sport, offering unique insights into issues such as sex, gender, movement, and the concepts of oppression and empowerment.

The thesis is clearly written and coherent and the conclusions are well-motivated. The arguments flow well and each point is well introduced with an appropriate reliance on literature. The overall structure makes sense and helps the reader to follow the main arguments.

The author has demonstrated the ability to engage critically with arguments, choosing relevant literature and engaging with it before determining which points will be useful to her arguments.

Finally, the work is well written and presented in a style that makes it easy to read and with which to engage. I have no reservations regarding the quality of the thesis.

During the viva, if there is time, I would like to ask the following questions:

1) I like the identification of a definitional rupture occurring when the term 'woman' is introduced, meaning that a break occurs between facts of usage and facts of essence, such that process of definition itself becomes an issue and that this rupture can perhaps be dated back to Simone de Beauvoir, who asked what is a woman? Although you have addressed this, can you please summarize and then expand on that rupture a bit more and the potential implication for sport categorization, even though that is not what you were trying to address directly?

2) Understanding that you try to use the term 'female' when referring to the biological category used for sports categorisations, and the term 'woman' for those who identify as this gender categorisation and that trying to keep these terms separate at all times is, an impossible task from a lexical point of view. Can you say more about how that works and what more might be problematic with that approach?

3) By drawing upon standpoint theory, and the assumption that knowledge claims are always socially situated, and those who are socially located as insiders have an epistemological advantage when producing such knowledge, and further, that a researcher's characteristics affect substantive and practical aspects of the process of knowledge production, thus enabling scientists to draw upon their own experiences to determine 'blind spots,'— how then does this method (and your potential use of it) avoid the charge of relativism? And how does it result in an enhanced notion of objectivity, without fractionalizing positions so much that they become solipsistic?

With this, I therefore recommend the thesis for defence.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Schneider', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Name: Angela Schneider

Date: 2024

29th May