



FACULTY OF ARTS
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

Opponent's Review

Alžběta Skrbková, "Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin's *The Brazen Serpent: A Contextual Analysis*," BA thesis

Choice of Topic:

The topic area selected for the thesis is well focused and framed. Ms Skrbková's approach despite its flaws demonstrates initiative, independent thinking and an engagement with Ní Chuilleanáin's poetry.

Thesis statement / aims and objectives:

The project is constructed around an oblique but functional hypothesis. Aims and objectives are clearly articulated.

Structure and development:

Overall the project has a logical structure moving from general to particular. Ms Skrbková maps Ní Chuilleanáin's position within the Irish context relatively well and turns an initial misunderstanding to advantage. Her discussion of the serpent symbol is the strongest section of the work in my opinion. The potential interpretations of the symbol begin to be explored in a fruitful manner. Unfortunately for a project devoted to poetry the least effective chapter is the close reading of the poem "A Hand, A Wood." The contextual interpretive strategy forecloses discussion of the poetic qualities of the work in favour of biographical detail.

Research:

Ms Skrbková's interview is first-rate, however as the project develops it comes to dominate as sole outside point of reference. The other critical materials identified in the bibliography are excellent but are at times used almost in passing. This is not to say that Ms Skrbková misuses this material, she seems aware of different points of view and incorporates some of them, but in a limited manner. In the same vein, occasionally assertions could have been productively verified with reference to other secondary texts (in particular on the subject of the religious life for women in an Irish context) to aid a sense of balance.

Use of sources:

Sources are in general appropriately used; quotations are managed well. Ultimately there is an over dependence on the interview.

Stylistics and Language:

Ms Skrbková's writing style is fluid, natural and clear. Her grammar is excellent.

Format:

The font style used is incorrect and the formatting of the table of contents would need some adjustment to conform to faculty and departmental guidelines. The format of footnotes and bibliography contain only minor errors. The Czech summary is absent from bound version.

I recommend the thesis for defence and propose to grade the work excellent / 1.

1.6.2010

Clare Wallace, PhD