



FACULTY OF ARTS
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

Supervisor's Review

Šarka Homolková, "Another Way Out: Women in Kate O'Brien's Fiction," MA thesis

Šarka Homolková's thesis proposes an analysis of the representations of women in Kate O'Brien's main works and argues that implicit in those representations is a judicious feminist critique of the roles available to women in the Ireland of O'Brien's day. While the aims of the thesis are not particularly complex they are clearly outlined in the opening chapter. The survey of the scholarly debate around O'Brien's feminism covers its broad contours rather than its nuances. The selection of novels is well justified and logical. Overall although the thesis lacks theoretical complexity or a particularly novel argument, it promises a set historically contextualised of close analyses of character, and this is what it dutifully delivers.

Chapter two features some strong research into the history of women in modern Irish society. These details are carefully interleaved with examples from the novels. Ms. Homolková lays a foundation for understanding women's lot in a solid and fairly simple manner. Perhaps, during the defence the role and impact of Catholicism on public and private life might be further discussed. In particular the interpretation of the character Molly's fate in *Without My Cloak* warrants a more penetrating analysis. Beyond this, the thematic groupings of the remaining chapters is strategic and allows for the progression in O'Brien's treatment of female identities to emerge in quite a productive manner. Character description is the keynote of the thesis.

Research for this project shows some good initiative and sources are strategically deployed. With regard to the primary texts, Ms. Homolková has certainly delved into O'Brien's work in an extended and commendable manner. In terms of style and language, while some minor errors remain, the work is written in a clear and consistent fashion. Main criticisms would be that at times the close reading of the novels is gratuitously repetitious, and the understanding of the codified behaviours of Irish Middleclass Catholic life is somewhat one dimensional. The concluding chapter perhaps retreads the points already established rather too much. The format of the work and citation of sources is correct.

I recommend the thesis for defence and propose to grade the work "very good" / 2.

13.5.2013

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