



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

**Supervisor's Report:**

**Elizabet Kovačeva, "Narrative Structures in Virginia Woolf's Shorter Fiction," BA thesis**

**Choice of Topic:**

The proposed topic of this BA thesis is certainly both an ambitious and fruitful one. The thesis works through a set of complex narratological issues in an intellectually discerning and contextually sensitive manner, and with a confidence that marks this as exceptional piece of work for a BA level student.

**Thesis statement / aims and objectives:**

The project is constructed around a cogently articulated set of objectives. Primary among these is a reassessment of the significance of Woolf's shorter fiction and an assertion of its integral role in her development as a writer. Ms Kovačeva clearly identifies the challenge and subsidiary, embedded aspects of the issue of narrative structure, intertextuality and genre in Woolf's shorter fiction and is capable of identifying integral relationships essential to analysing the issue without oversimplification. The objectives of the work are specific and perceptively developed throughout in a combination of contextual, conceptual and analytic modes. The limits of the enquiry and the selection of texts for analysis are both coherently explained.

**Structure and development:**

The organization of the thesis is logical and transitions between ideas enhance presentation. Chapter one provides a crucial and astute overview of Woolf's experiments with the short story form, the contexts and influences that bear upon this work and how it relates to her longer fiction. Ms Kovačeva deftly navigates the turbulent waters of modernism, the stiller ones of the Bloomsbury Group, she charts the eddies of Chekhovian influence and the critical crosscurrents of generic labelling. Chapters two and three then elaborate the two core aspects of the investigation. Chapter two explores intertextuality in a pair of pieces first published in the 1920s, "Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street" and in "The New Dress", while chapter three examines "Blue & Green" and "An Unwritten Novel", texts which Ms Kovačeva contends reveal Woolf playing with "the boundaries of the short story genre." Strong, nuanced close reading is at the heart of these chapters but always accompanied by an awareness of critical and cultural contexts.

**Research:**

The research undertaken for this project extends well beyond the usual range for a BA work. The resources sought out, selected and used by Ms Kovačeva testify to a dedication and sense of initiative that is rare. She has succeeded in assembling an impressive bibliography comprising not only of important standard texts but also of recently published articles and books. These materials are throughout the work deployed with skill and judgement.



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**Use of sources:**

There are no major formal or stylistic issues concerning the use of sources, although it might have been better to restart footnote numbers at the beginning of each new chapter. Materials have been cited appropriately throughout.

**Stylistics and language:**

Ms Kovačeva's writing style is excellent—fluent, consistent and accomplished. Language clearly and effectively communicates ideas and is nuanced and eloquent.

**Format:**

Consistent use of appropriate format. A great deal of care has been taken with format of the project.

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

12.8.2013

Doc. Clare Wallace, PhD