“Unbinding the Female Prometheus: L’Écriture féminine in Selected Poetry of Sylvia Plath” is an accomplished work of a mature and dedicated student. From determining the theme and selecting Plath's poetry to researching the critical material, Michaela Piňosová proceeded independently. The quality of her writing, both on the level of content as well as the form, was such that my input needed to be minimal and involved primarily minor stylistic issues.

The thesis opens with a discussion of the theoretical framework (particularly the concept of l’écriture féminine) and subsequently, in three chapters, it illustrates how Plath's poetry gradually moved away from the “masculine symbolic discourse” and opened to “the feminine” (Abstract). The theoretical chapter is informed and cautious, aware of the difficulty to define what l’écriture féminine consists in and who its practitioners are, beyond the (primarily male) authors identified by the “French feminist critics” such as Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva themselves. A brief but succinct overview of the negative criticism of l’écriture féminine is presented here as well; the names include Nina Baym, Trinh T. Minh-ha and Sara Mills. My only question concerns Ms. Piňosová's view of this criticism—would she herself consider l’écriture féminine essentialist, anti-feminist, etc.?

The three chapters on Plath's poetry overview the poet's work in the particular period as well as analyze selected verses through the lens of l’écriture féminine. Besides references to the work of the French feminist critics, particularly Kristeva and Cixous, Ms. Piňosová offers glimpses into the biographical and critical context in which Plath's poems originated (through references to her journal, among other things). This additional material nicely supplements her focused analysis of the selected poems. Rather than questioning Ms. Piňosová's interpretations of Plath's poetry (which may be interpreted differently as well, as I am sure Ms. Piňosová knows), I wonder about the centrality of the female body, both in the way l’écriture féminine is understood here and in the way Plath's poetry supposedly exemplifies it. If the female body (its cycles, childbirth, etc.) is the source of the feminine in Plath's writing, what would be the source of the feminine in writing produced by men and could Ms. Piňosová suggest any male poets whose work is marked by the feminine (leaving aside the names discussed by the French critics themselves)?

On the whole, to repeat, this is an accomplished thesis that successfully deals with challenging criticism and equally challenging poetry. In my view it may be graded as “excellent” (“výborně”).

Pavla Veselá, PhD. August 30, 2017