



FACULTY OF ARTS  
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY  
IN PRAGUE



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

26 June 2013

Supervisor's Report on  
LIMITS AND LANGUAGES IN CONTEMPORARY IRISH WOMEN'S POETRY  
by Daniela Theinová

Doctoral Thesis  
Submitted June 2013

Daniela Theinová began her doctoral studies under the supervision of Professor Martin Procházka in 2003, interrupted her work in the academic year 2006/7, and began again in January 2011, under my supervision. However, we began consulting about her project some two or three years earlier.

At all times, she proved herself an outstanding student, attentive to the nuances of poetic texts while cognizant of the larger critical-theoretical issues at play in the poetry of contemporary Irish women poets. These latter approach their work as poets already having experienced second-wave feminism, both on their pulses and in university curricula, and this academic sophistication subtending the poems makes special demands on the critic. The line between the poems and the critical texts about poems, in a community that numbers perhaps only a hundred or more, makes for a special osmosis of preoccupation and method. It is hard to say where the poems end and the criticism begins, as is evinced, for instance, by writers like Leontia Flynn, Caitríona O'Reilly and Sinéad Morrissey – all possessors of Ph.D.s, and the first works in the same university department as the poet on whom she wrote her doctoral dissertation. Moreover, language politics in Ireland is both an intellectual and emotive issue; given that Ms Theinová can deal with texts in both Irish and English, and that she is located outside Ireland, without any institutional or cultural investment in the country, allows her to come to these issues with a fresh eye.

The range and originality of her research are striking. As remarked above, she has covered poetry in both English and Irish languages, overcoming formidable linguistic challenges in the latter area. Drawing upon the complex debates of feminist literary theory, she has read the poems with a unique philosophical flair, which at no point obscures their value *as* poems. The issue of feminism in Irish poetry of the last few decades cannot, she persuasively argues, be decoupled from the language question, more particularly the way that postcolonial literary idiom is ghosted by another language and poetic tradition. This tells us much of interest not only about Irish poetry, but Irish literature more generally, as well as the literature of Scotland and Wales. In her



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doctoral studies, she has established a firm basis to provide original readings of the varied literature of the Archipelago.

Moreover, in a long and honoured Czech tradition, she has brought to her academic research the precision and imagination of the translator, and is thus able to deploy profound insight into the literary works in her argumentation. These complementary skills vouchsafe outstanding results in both fields.

Connected with her work as translator has been a consistent and spirited advocacy of the works of lesser known Irish poets in the Czech scene. This has entailed, obviously, translation itself, but is then followed by hosting the stays of poets in the Czech Republic and presenting their work in readings, broadcasts, seminars and interviews. Most recently, she introduced the Irish poet Medbh McGuckian at a reading, displaying both wide knowledge of the Irish context as well as judiciousness in how to present that knowledge to the Prague audience. She thus has many of the gifts necessary to make a successful pedagogue at university level. A scholar of English literature in this country, like a translator, lives between two tongues and two (or more traditions), moving expertly between them; Daniela Theinová has already taken her place within this tradition, and I look forward greatly to the work she will do in the years ahead.

I strongly recommend that this work go forward for defence.

doc. Justin Quinn Ph.D.