



FACULTY OF ARTS
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

**SUPERVISOR'S REPORT
BA THESIS**

**Feminism in the Poetry of Adrienne Rich: A Comparison of Her Early and Late Poems
Natalie Cimalová**

“Feminism in the Poetry of Adrienne Rich: A Comparison of Her Early and Late Poems” delineates the growth of Adrienne Rich’s body of writing. It opens with a discussion of Rich’s first collection, *A Change of World* (1951), and closes with a consideration of *An Atlas of the Difficult World* (1991). Critical reading of selected poems is supplemented with extracts from Rich’s essays and supported with a fair amount of secondary material.

The text is a rough outline of Rich's trajectory rather than an in-depth analysis but given that this is a BA thesis, it is not a major problem. Ms. Cimalová focuses on illustrative poetry and essays, and her reading of the shorter poems is informed. “An Atlas of the Difficult World” and Rich's later poetry are not dealt with as carefully as they could be. More recent collections, such as *Telephone Ringing in the Labyrinth* (2007) or *Tonight No Poetry Will Serve* (2011), could have been addressed as well, which I suggested to Ms. Cimalová at the outset, but the middle part of Rich's career seems to attract the critics more than her collections from the 1990s onwards. I wonder if the candidate could reflect on the reasons why much criticism continues to focus on this part of the poet's career (and on the content rather than the form of her later work). What is the appeal? What are the gains and what are the losses involved in such a focus?

I also wonder if the candidate could elaborate on her point regarding Rich's understanding of poetry. She writes that “[t]hrough her poetry, Rich led a dialogue with the outside world, drew the readers' attention to social injustice and tried to mobilize them to protest against external oppression and social inequality” (5), but would Ms. Cimalová see this as the only view that Rich had of poetry? In a discussion at the Kelly Writers House in 2005, for example, the poet favorably recalled Mallarme's famous declaration that poems are not made with ideas but with words. Would this throw a different light on the above statement and could Ms. Cimalová think of other examples (poems, interviews or essays) where Rich considers poetry from a number of angles?

Depending on the defense, I propose the grade “very good” (2) or “excellent” (1).

Pavla Veselá, PhD.

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