

POSUDEK BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Jméno a příjmení studenta: Simona Kalinová
Název bakalářské práce: Ian McEwan's Fictional Portrayals of Female Heroines
Vedoucí bakalářské práce: PhDr. Alice Sukdolová, Ph.D.
Oponent bakalářské práce: PhDr. Christopher Koy, M.A., Ph.D.

- I. Cíl práce a jeho naplnění: 3. Cíl práce byl adekvátní, ale jen částečně naplněný
- II. Struktura práce: 3. Uspokojivá
- III. Práce s literaturou: 3. Průměrná práce s literaturou
- IV. Formální stránka: 1. Odpovídá všem stanoveným požadavkům
- VI. Jazyková úroveň práce: 1. Výborná
- VII. Náročnost zpracování tématu: 3. Střední

Vyjádření oponent bakalářské práce:

There is an incredible unevenness in the composition of this bachelor thesis that is extremely confusing to this reader (serving as the opponent). The first half presents mostly cold war politics and culture while the second half analysis hardly relates the novels to the any of the details delivered in what is usually designated the theoretical part. Moreover, the actual title of this thesis does not include the words "**cold war**" but rather "**female heroines**," a rather redundant phrasing in my opinion since it is impossible to write of "male heroines" (unless Ms. Kalinová knows something about Queer Theory that I do not know). Hence, instead of the cold war, Ms. Kalinová clearly should have dedicated her theoretical section to feminist theory and subsequently applied that theory to McEwan's heroines in her analysis of the second half of this work. Alas, there is no luck for us to read what the title of the thesis indicates! If I may recapitulate the first half, chapter 3 "Ian McEwan and Cold War as a recurrent theme," then chapter 4 simply "Cold War" and chapter 5 "Characterization of the times and social climate during Cold War in Great Britain" and then, what seems hardly differing in subject matter, chapter 6 "Cold War decades in Great Britain" then Chapter 7 "The following decades in Great Britain." Thus, pages 10 through 31 do not focus (as they ~~should~~ must) on feminist theory but instead on political history (which is so frustrating!) To me this is a dreadful waste of 21 pages. I'm sorry if this sounds a bit harsh, but Ms. Kalinová should really address those issues referred to in her title and not invent a new one.

Finally, chapter 8 addresses the real point of this bachelor thesis as expressed in its title: "Representation of female heroines, issues of partnership and marital relations in McEwan's work," but what I discover to my astonishment is its length, a paltry 2½ pages (actually a bit less than even that), specifically from pp. 34 to 36. How is this possible? In the first category

of assessment, "Cíl práce a jeho naplnění" I wrote too charitably a mark of 3 "Cíl práce byl adekvátní, ale jen částečně naplněný" and I do feel it is way too generous. I marked likewise regarding structure since chapters 3 through 7, these twenty plus pages, constitute much of this thesis' structure, and these chapters definitely should not be there, given the BP's title. If at all, perhaps one of them might be permissible. Ms. Kalinová will definitely have some explaining to do on why she did not appropriately address the real topic of her bachelor thesis: 2½ pages in the theoretical part is inexcusably short.

When female writers produce novels with female heroines, are these characters commonly different from male authors? How beautiful are women writer heroines compared to those of male writers? How much do heroines by female novelists conform to social pressures compared to those of male authors? Do heroines "perform" for men in works by female novelists like they do for male novelists? Do they wear alluring clothing, make-up and the like? Is the woman's voice accurately revealed by British male authors? Are prostitutes, workers in the so-called oldest profession, presented differently depending on the gender of the author? Is subordination the common lot for heroines of authors of both genders? Has the fate of women improved over the last 230 years since the publication of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*? How have British authors of both genders addressed what Simone de Beauvoir defined as the feminine mystique? As anyone can tell, I am barely scratching the surface of what Ms. Kalinová's theoretical chapters should have presented and then applied in the second, "practical" part of this bachelor thesis.

Based on the end of the first paragraph of chapter 8, McEwan does not look particularly promising. Ms. Kalinová writes, "Some of the female characters portrayed by him take on traditional female roles and are very stereotypical-they are hypersensitive victims, mothers and beautiful but unable to cope with difficulties. He portrays women who are less or not at all admirable" (p. 34). Obviously a female *character* and a *heroine* are not the same, though Ms. Kalinová unfortunately employs both terms in her literary analysis interchangeably, as if the two words really mean the same in her literary analysis of McEwan's three works of fiction. A problem besides the measly length is how Ms. Kalinová fails to deliver on the subchapter's title. Instead of offering McEwan's other fiction in this background chapter (before delving deeper in the three novels), Ms. Kalinová cites *The Comfort of Strangers* and *On Chesil Beach* in her 2½ page chapter, i.e., two of the three novels she should be deeply analyzing in separate chapters. "Representation of female heroines, issues of partnership and marital relations in McEwan's work" should reveal his other novels instead, since "in McEwan's work" means much more than the three novels under study later. Why she did not evaluate (more than cursorily at the superficial plot level) more than two short stories is unclear. There might have been fruitful evaluation of some development of McEwan's thinking on this issue, but Ms. Kalinová never takes it up seriously.

In the next chapter, after a few pages of plot summary and extensive quoting from McEwan's novel *The Comfort of Strangers*, it becomes clear that neither Ms. Kalinová's cold war background nor any feminist theory has been applied. Besides quotes, the plot has been summarized, and a brief conditional "what if" comment is offered regarding Mary (p. 40), but nothing constituting textual interpretation from a theoretical feminist point of view. Ms. Kalinová loses track, her summary on p. 45 actually overlaps quoting of *On Chesil Beach*:

"To other people, she was just a beaten wife, which she really was, she realized that.

... To Robert's friends I was just another beaten wife, which was exactly what I was... Nobody noticed. It gave Robert some status round the places where he drank... (p. 143)"

The tenth chapter covering the novel *On Chesil Beach* begins by offering an assessment of McEwan's development, specifically his writing style (though in reading her first paragraph it becomes clear that she considers **plot**, **content** and **characters** to be synonymous with **writing style**). She indicates that the feminist movement influenced his writing by softening his violence and sadistic tendencies by the end of the 1970s, even though the wife-beating and wife back-breaking novel *The Comfort of Strangers*, attended to by Ms. Kalinová in the previous chapter, came out in 1981. The tenth chapter consists of more extensive quoting from the novel and more plot summary, with no cold war links (unless by "cold war" Ms. Kalinová means frigid Florence's cold shoulder offered to the sex-starved, begging Edward. (I give up on hoping for any feminist interpretations.) Pages 58-60 again only offer way more quotes from McEwan's novel than any ideas of its significance from Ms. Kalinová. On another topic, I will note that Ms. Kalinová writes excellent English. He has help from McEwan though. Since so much of these chapters are straight quotes of McEwan's novels rather than any analytical or interpretive writing by Ms Kalinová, the sixth rubric "Jazyková úroveň práce" cannot help but be marked as 1 since McEwan's English is always flawless.

On to the bibliography: the sources used by Ms. Kalinová are not presented properly. She is not following formatting requirements regarding articles. Specifically, the Chinese article on McEwan's novel *Black Dogs* by the Chinese scholar Meiling Fu does not mention the journal it was published nor the year, nor the issue or page numbers. Dominic Head's article or chapter within a book does not mention city or publisher, nor the page numbers his article (or chapter) appears. On p. 79 Ms. Kalinová has oddly written some sentences rather than continuing with listing the names of cited literature. There are significantly more online cold war sources than any kind of secondary sources on McEwan's writing or on feminist theory or even on any literature remotely connected to women.

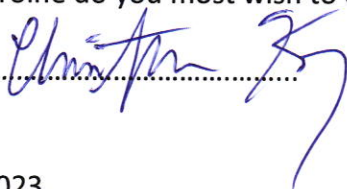
Práce splňuje základní požadavky kladené na tento typ prací, a proto ji doporučuji k ústní obhajobě.

Navrhovaná známka: dobře

Otázky k obhajobě:

1. Concretely, what connection does the cold war have with McEwan's heroines in the three novels you studied?
2. Tell me your understanding of feminism interpretation of fiction and why it is not evident in your thesis.
3. Which heroine do you most wish to emulate?

Podpis oponent:.....



Datum: 18. 8. 2023

*nehodící se škrtněte