

Bachelor Dissertation Evaluation/Posudek na bakalářskou práci

Title of the Dissertation: „*Wonderworks*“ v literatuře původních obyvatel Kanady na příkladu románu *Split Tooth* od Tanyi Tagaq/*Wonderworks in Canadian Indigenous Literature: the Case of Tanya Tagaq's Split Tooth*

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Supervisor: Mgr. Klára Kolinská, M.A., PhD.

Second Reader: Pavla Veselá, M.A., PhD.

#### Supervisor's Evaluation:

Adéla Černá's Bachelor Dissertation addresses a truly relevant, productive, and quite a topical subject matter: the concept of *wonderwork*, as defined by Canadian Indigenous author and scholar Daniel Heath Justice, and its application to the interpretation of the 2018 novel *Split Tooth* by Inuit author and performance artist Tanya Tagaq.

The argument of the dissertation is carefully premeditated and grounded in solid research of sources that are well chosen and relevant to the presented analysis, which is introduced by conceptualizing the genre of *wonderwork*, a term rarely used outside of the subject area of Indigenous literature. This thus serves as a useful step towards enriching the discussion not only of the novel itself, but also that of genre theory, and the related discourse of Indigeneity, decolonization, and minority artistic representation.

The author is clearly aware of the complex and culturally, as well as ethically sensitive implications of her endeavour. In the Introduction, she explicitly articulates her position as a non-Indigenous researcher venturing into a culturally distant area, and the need to act upon the recognition of respect and tolerance towards it. The text of the dissertation is then meaningfully divided into three main chapters; the first one serves as an introduction to Inuit literature as such, with special focus on its traditionally oral character, still typically discernible in writing by contemporary authors including, among others, Tanya Tagaq herself. This part prepares ground for a focused argumentation in the second chapter, which is dedicated to the conceptualization of the genre of *wonderwork* and its comparison with those of the fantastic and magic realism. The final parts of this chapter then introduce the genre referred to as “Indigenous futurism” and, quite usefully, comment of the implications of reading Indigenous literature as a form of art, and as a cultural, ideological, and ethical

statement. Consequently, the last chapter focuses on the close reading and detailed analysis of Tanya Tagaq's novel as an example of the genre of wonderwork; specifically, the chapter explores how Tagaq's novel manifests the typical characteristic features of wonderwork detailed in the previous chapter: "the permeation of 'the unreal' into 'the real', the disruption of stereotypical tropes imposed by settler-colonial narratives, and the vision of different futures" (p. 37). The analysis demonstrates a sound understanding of both the novel and its context, and the ability to focus on representative detail and ability to use it in support of the author's independent argument. This approach, together with a well-developed sense of structure and clear and functional organization of the text, enables the author to arrive at generally convincing conclusions concerning both the interpretation of Tagaq's novel and its place in the context of contemporary Indigenous writing and the public discourse related to it.

For the discussion during the defence, I would suggest a question regarding the presumed target demographic in the field of Inuit literature; what does the author think about the potential, and frequently discussed danger of this kind of art, exemplified here by Tagaq's novel, being too "culturally specific" and thus limited in impact outside of its sphere of origin? And how does the problem of "exoticization" influence the public debate of the readers' response to it?

On the formal level, the dissertation is written in sufficiently competent academic English with occasional, and very minor stylistic blemishes that do not obscure the good impression of the text as a whole.

In view of the comments made above I recommend Adéla Černá's Bachelor dissertation for defence with a suggested evaluation by the mark A – VÝBORNĚ.

In Prague, August 22nd, 2024

Mgr. Klára Kolinská, M.A., PhD.