



FAKULTA  
HUMANITNÍCH STUDIÍ  
Univerzita Karlova

Advisor Report for Patrícia Surmajová's Bachelor's Thesis for the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.

Patrícia Surmajová has submitted a thesis entitled, "The Importance of Women in Mitigating the Impacts of the Environmental Crisis; Through the Lens of Ecofeminism," for part of the requirements for her Bachelor's degree at the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University. This thesis in the form of a literature review argues for the inclusion of ecofeminism within any and all attempts to re/solve the environmental crisis. Patrícia pays special attention to a few key concepts within ecofeminism to help her support her case: embodiment; embeddedness; and intersectionality. In addition, she focuses on the premise within ecofeminism that without working towards fixing gender relations we cannot hope to end the environmental crisis. Along those lines, she is convinced that any good attempt at solving the environmental crisis without the contributions of women, particularly local women and those men whose interactions and relationship to their environment provide knowledge of its needs and can propose possible solutions. She ends the thesis with a number of poignant examples from both the global South and the North (what is often called West) to support her thesis' contentions. If these examples do not convince the reader, I'm not sure what would.

As Patrícia's advisor, I must commend her on her ability to work independently and, more importantly, for the ways in which she took my suggestions and ideas very seriously as she wrote. We had many great conversations and Patrícia was flexible in her approach to the topic - so much so that in a way this thesis is very different from her original proposal. I find the thesis to be well-researched with ample examples of various concepts within the 'green movement' and suggestions for how to incorporate ecofeminism into the larger environmental movement. What I like most about this are the ways in which the included examples show that incorporating women makes more successful projects in the long term and that women's incorporation does not seem to complicate the matter (as in it is not difficult to do - even if patriarchy often seems to make it seem so) but rather enhances the outcomes.

In terms of theory, Patrícia's understanding of women within ecofeminism could be more nuanced. She complicates the idea on pages 29-30, but then does not always stay true to that complication. Rather, she is tied-up in a more essentialist understanding of women/nature connection that ecofeminism, while it may have started there, has distanced itself from considerably. Nonetheless, it is still true that women and children are more vulnerable when environmental changes occur and also more knowledgeable about their local environment, given social roles, than most men and certainly more than outsiders to the area. This is quite clear in the thesis. In fact, I rather liked her summary of Twine, "By challenging traditional notions of superiority and inferiority, ecofeminism aims to raise awareness of the inherent closeness of all individuals to nature," (29).

If there is one thing that I think still needs work, that would be some of the English structure of the paragraphs, the occasional repetition of ideas, and the ways in which some concepts are not explained as sufficiently as they could be. Here, I will note three areas on which she could comment on at the defence. First, does Patrícia think that an explanation of ecofeminist epistemology would have helped explain why it is that women have knowledge about the environmental crisis based on their intimate daily experiences with nature? (Here I am particularly thinking of the first paragraph on page 26.) Second, on page 27, Patrícia argues for the local to be an ecofeminist priority for environmental concern. Why? Does she find the local to be more important for ecofeminists? If so, why? How does she think ecofeminists could also tackle problems like greenhouse gas emissions, fossil fuel use, and so on? Finally, and most importantly for me, if she could change one thing about the thesis at this point, what would that be?

In summary, Patrícia has written a defensible thesis and I recommend a preliminary grade of excellent (1) dependent of course on the outcome of the defense.

Near Milevsko, 3 September 2024.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dr. Ivy Helman", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ivy Helman, Ph.D.