



POSUDEK OPONENTA DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglická a americká literatura (jednooborové navazující studium)**

Název práce: **The Concept of Pity and Faith in *The Heart of the Matter***

Autorka práce: **Bc. Hošková Helena**

Vedoucí diplomové práce: **doc. PhDr. Ladislav Nagy, Ph.D.**

Oponent diplomové práce: **Mgr. Tomáš Jajtner, Ph.D. et Th.D.**

Short characteristics of the thesis

Helena Hošková's thesis interprets Graham Greene's novel *The Heart of the Matter* by focusing on its two crucial concepts of *pity* and *faith*. In the first two chapters, the author sketches a short history of the difficult relationship between Christian faith and modern culture, Greene's conversion to Catholicism as well as his development as a writer. The third, final chapter of the first "theoretical" part thematizes Greene's narrative technique. The central chapter 4 deals specifically with *The Heart of the Matter*, starting from the plot and the characters, moving on to the central themes of pity and faith. Chapter 5 introduces the film adaptation of *The Heart of the Matter* and its respective emphases in interpreting the novel. The Conclusion (Chapter 6) summarizes the main points of the previous analysis and points out the relevance of the novel in modern (i.e. not only English) literature.

Overall assessment

The thesis is written in a pleasing style with just a few mistakes in the use of articles. It is a well-structured, illuminating work which highlights important points in relation to the *The Heart of the Matter* and the entire Greene's oeuvre. I especially appreciate Helena's analysis of Greene's narrative technique as well as her close reading skills. As such, it definitely deserves praise for a carefully prepared and well-done piece of work.

Since this is a *literary* analysis, one can hardly expect a deeper insight into some of the finer theological distinctions such as e.g. the difference between "pity" and "mercy" and "faith" and "religion". The thesis, however, might have benefited from such analyses, particularly as regards the aspects of Catholic doctrine which Greene found most appealing and also the most puzzling ones. In that sense, Greene is known as the "poet of paradox" with a remarkable gift of not just juxtaposing, but relating and joining even the most dissimilar things. In fact, the most puzzling aspect of the Catholic doctrine in Greene's reflection is the seemingly insurmountable gap between an incredibly high ideal of sanctity and a real, non-moralising "pastoral" focus on the fallen human reality. Pity calls forth an action, a real effort to share the human condition to the utmost ends. Pity can be a sign of superiority and lead to a paralysis, it can also lead to solidarity and to a merciful embrace of the human condition, i.e. to reclaiming the original human dignity by accepting God's unconditional grace.



One should also be careful when using some of the theological terms, especially the word "dogma". Indeed, the word comes from Greek verb "dokein" meaning "seem good". Contrary to the popular view, most dogmas of the Christian faith **do not** have a quasi-legal formulation "good here, bad there", but are usually paradoxically formulated to legitimize both sides of the argument. Most of them thus want to avoid the extreme "one-sided" positions. E.g. the key doctrine of Jesus as a "God-man" emphasises Jesus's "full humanity and full divinity", thereby defining the playground for the theological reflection. The genius of G. Greene is, as I believe, the genius of understanding the drama and the complexity of these oppositions and exploiting them for literary reflection.

Nevertheless, Helena's thesis fulfils all the main expectations and requirements for an M.A. thesis and I **do** recommend the thesis for defence.

I suggest the following grade: **excellent (výborně)**.

24. 8. 2017

Datum

Podpis