

POSUDEK BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Jméno a příjmení studenta: Jiří Meisl
Název bakalářské práce: The Motif of Fear in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
Vedoucí bakalářské práce: Ph.Dr. Kamila Vránková, Ph.D.
Oponent bakalářské práce: PhDr. Christopher Koy, M.A., Ph.D.

I. Cíl práce a jeho naplnění: 1. Cíl práce byl stanoven a naplněn v souladu s tématem

II. Struktura práce: 1. Logická, jasná a přehledná

III. Práce s literaturou: 1. Výborná: zvoleny a použity vhodné prameny v patřičném rozsahu

IV. Formální stránka: 1. Odpovídá všem stanoveným požadavkům

VI. Jazyková úroveň práce: 1. Výborná

VII. Náročnost zpracování tématu: 1. Velmi vysoká

Vyjádření vedoucího bakalářské práce:

One of the best bachelor theses I have read in a long time, Mr. Jiří Meisl has written an insightful, longer analytical study of two of the greatest dystopian classics of British fiction in the 20th century. Mr. Meisl did so in detailed manner, citing not only historical and philosophical but secondary literary sources brilliantly as he linked these two works with the great tradition preceding their composition seamlessly and succinctly. It is remarkably to read the thorough antecedents of these two works, including, among my favorites (and underrated) the longer short story "The Machine Stops" by E.M. Forster and its magnificent characters Vashti and Kuno. Before reading this thesis, I had never heard of Pufendorf!

What sort of criticism may I offer? The thoroughness of this bachelor thesis as well as its length makes me ponder why it is not a diploma thesis instead. That is not the only criticism I can offer, but as we consider the greater demands of theory and secondary literature in diploma works, I would regard this effort as vyborne for the higher magistr title as well. But

since I have the duty to criticize and feel that the work is so very well done, I will warn the reader that my critique below is more in the line of hair-splitting.

The focus of this thesis is an interpretation of fear in two novels which are both original and thought-provoking (and as thoroughly anti-romantic thematically and stylistically, even though fear is a common emotive feature in romantic fiction). These dystopian novels attempt to predict the ominous direction our modern, technical, government-run societies may well take. Although it is abundantly clear that some works were at his disposal while reading the background chapters, Mr. Meisl does not rely so heavily on secondary literature for his own fertile interpretation. Yet an intertextual relationship is referred to, specifically the anti-colonial drama *The Tempest*, without citing the aspects in *Brave New World* which replicate or even echo Shakespeare. For example, the fear of motherhood, procreation and a kind of revulsion of the “savagery” of raising a family (on the part of the hatchery and conditioning center students, for example) is not evident in *The Tempest*. In fact, Caliban, representative of the savage, seems bereft of any family altogether while the cultivated Prospero, the very opposite of savagery, expresses deep paternal feelings for family, in particular for his beautiful daughter Miranda. At one point Caliban’s lust briefly directs him to attempt to rape her, but no echo of *The Tempest* in *Brave New World* appears evident of any of Mr. Meisl’s analysis. It would, in short, be informative to read where (or in what manner) any influence may be seen which *The Tempest* exerts on *Brave New World* rather than merely stating its influence as fact – without any persuasive “textual proof” or argument thereof.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* one basic aspect pertaining to fear which I feel is missing in Mr. Meisl’s study is an analysis of the masochistic dimension which underlies the relationship between the people and the cult of Ingsoc or the Party. The society described by Orwell is essentially torture of the people, both mentally and spiritually. (It is only in room 101 in which brutal physical torture takes place.) The pathology of masochism, a cult love to replace the natural erotic loving of a fellow human being, entails painful self-hatred and self-denial which is transformed to the love of Party and of Big Brother. It would be useful to incorporate this into the analysis of the fear dimension. It is evident to a less powerful extent, I think, in *Brave New World*.

The collective hatred of Goldstein in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, an obviously Jewish name, is no accident by Orwell. Here he replicated not only the Stalinist attacks on the former head of the Red Army, the Jew Leon Trotsky (as well as many other Russian Jews), but the fact that Jews were scapegoated in neo-totalitarian societies in France (Alfred Dreyfuss), in Germany (Rosa Luxemburg and later all Jews generally), Czechoslovakia (Rudolf Slanský and others) as well as in the McCarthy era in the United States (J. Robert Oppenheimer, the Hollywood Ten, and most on the Red Channels’ list plus scores of other Jews). Anti-Semitism may certainly be regarded as pathological, and its analysis might well be incorporated on this bachelor thesis dedicated, as it is, to “fear” – namely the fear of the Jew.

I will conclude by mentioning that this work is masterfully formatted and maturely argued on what I would regard as a deceptively straightforward and comprehensible topic. The erudite language level is distinguished by nearly flawless grammar, and the interpretations of the novels are in my opinion original and thought-provoking. The amount of research conducted and the clarity of presentation, fine organization and thoughtful analysis are all

most impressive indeed. This work demonstrates extensive reading and analysis and easily deserves the mark of excellent.

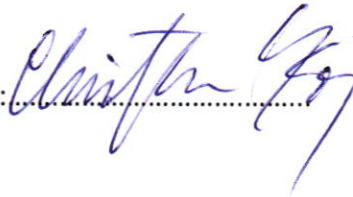
Práce splňuje * základní požadavky kladené na tento typ prací, a proto ji doporučuji * k ústní obhajobě.

Navrhovaná známka: výborně *

Otázky k obhajobě:

1. Please offer your opinion regarding which of the two novels you, as a Czech man of the 21st century, find the most and the least realistic AND WHY ?
2. Have you read any of the other dystopian novels that you refer to on pp. 16-17? Which of them, in your opinion, deliver a greater "punch" to the modern reader than *Brave New World* or *In Nineteen Eighty-Four*?

Podpis oponenta bakalářské práce:



Datum: 21. 5. 2019

*nehodící se škrtněte