

## POSUDEK DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

*Jméno a příjmení studenta:* Bc. Tereza Benešová  
*Název diplomové práce:* Black Characters in British Literature of the 19th century  
*Vedoucí diplomové práce:* PhDr. Christopher E. Koy, M. A., Ph.D.  
*Oponent diplomové práce:* PhDr. Alice Sukdolová, Ph.D.

- I. Cíl práce a jeho naplnění:
1. Cíl práce byl stanoven a naplněn v souladu s tématem
  - ~~2. Cíl práce byl adekvátní, ale jen částečně naplněný~~
  - ~~3. Stanovený cíl nebyl naplněn~~
- II. Struktura práce:
1. Logická, jasná a přehledná
  - ~~2. Přiměřená~~
  - ~~3. Nevhodná~~
- III. Práce s literaturou:
1. Výborná: zvoleny a použity vhodné prameny v patřičném rozsahu, přesná práce s citacemi, kritická analýza zdrojů
  - ~~2. Velmi dobrá práce s adekvátními prameny v patřičném rozsahu~~
  - ~~3. Průměrná práce s literaturou~~
  - ~~4. Slabá, chybná nebo nedostačující~~
- IV. Prezentace a interpretace dat:
1. Systematická, logická prezentace, originální a důsledná interpretace
  - ~~2. Dobrá prezentace dat, úspěšný pokus o jejich interpretaci~~
  - ~~3. Neodpovídající prezentace, nedostatečná analýza výsledků~~
- V. Formální stránka:
1. Odpovídá všem stanoveným požadavkům
  - ~~2. Nesplňuje některé stanovené požadavky~~
  - ~~3. Nesplňuje většinu stanovených požadavků~~
- VI. Jazyk práce:
- a) Po stránce stylistické
    - 1) výborná
    - 2) velmi dobrá
    - 3) nevyhovující
  - b) Po stránce lexikálně-gramatické
    - 1) výborná
    - 2) velmi dobrá
    - 3) nevyhovující

- VII. Náročnost zpracování tématu:
1. Vysoká
  2. Střední
  3. Nízká

- VIII. Přínosy práce:
1. Originální zpracování a názory, předkládá nová zjištění
  2. Průměrné
  3. ~~Nedostatečné, práce nemá jasný přínos pro obor~~

Vyjádření oponentky diplomové práce:

As a topic of her diploma thesis, Tereza Benešová has chosen the theme of blackness and the portrayal of black characters in the 19<sup>th</sup> century British fiction. Introductory chapters of the thesis deal with an historical background, the history of slavery and racial injustice reflected in literature. The material that was analyzed were selected literary works of the 19<sup>th</sup> century fiction that offer a stereotypical Victorian perspective of excluded otherness and the controversial issues of race and ethnicity. In the beginning of the thesis, the author provides a definition of a black character from the British perspective which includes also Indians, Arabs, Jews and other non-white representatives of various ethnic groups of other than the Caucasian origin. Unexpected notions of race and ethnicity (including limited views and opinions) were mentioned in the theoretical part, in connection with the views of influential philosophers such as Kant, Hume, or Carlyle. The theoretical part relies on the critical views of H. L. Gates Jr. (Figures in Black), E. Said and R. Watson, namely in the analysis of the works of Jane Austen, and the Bronte sisters, respectively.

The structure of the thesis is based on the chronological organization of selected Victorian novels according to their dates of publishing (Mansfield Park, Sanditon, Wuthering Heights, Jane Eyre, Vanity Fair and The Moonstone), addressing the issue of racism, slavery, and the occurrence of particular black, dark or mulatto characters in each novel, specifically. In the thesis, four general types of black characters are distinguished (black servants, minstrels, criminals and mentally ill humans), with some examples of black characters from the aforementioned novels.

An exceptional chapter of the thesis deals with W. Scott's Ivanhoe which, as the author of the thesis explains, deals with the presence of Jewish and Muslim characters in the novel, who represent ethnic and also religious otherness relevant to the general theme of the thesis. Relying on a variety of secondary sources (Eckenrode, 1917, van Arkel 2009), the chapter focuses on specific forms of slavery back in the 12<sup>th</sup> century during the Crusades. The strongest part of the interpretation lies in the chapters devoted to black characters in the Bronte sisters' novels, namely in the complex characterization of Heathcliff's ambiguity (representing the Gypsy folk, but possibly any other world ethnicity), and Bertha Mason, a Creole woman.

The thesis aims to point out an original conclusion which summarizes stereotypical images of black characters who depend on the white British majority, and reflect the inferior role of the blacks in 19<sup>th</sup> century British fiction. Interestingly enough, there is a positive judgment of Charles Dickens who is considered a significant opponent to slavery. Raising many relevant though controversial points of discussion, Tereza Benešová is generally able to express her critical opinion towards the variety of topics and themes of her analysis (e.g. on Jane Austen and imperialism, p. 31).

Throughout the work, excellent use of relevant secondary sources can be observed (Said, Culture and Imperialism, Roy, Imperialist Semiotics), including appropriate quotes from

primary sources which illustrate the main points of discussion. Generally speaking, Tereza Benešová offered her thorough knowledge of 19<sup>th</sup> century British fiction, as well as her enthusiasm concerning the main theme of the thesis.

Nevertheless, some formal inconsistencies in grammatical categories occur rather frequently (both morphological 7, 18, 21, 33, 38, 69, and syntactic 17, 38) and therefore I evaluate the language of the thesis as merely adequate, but not excellent.

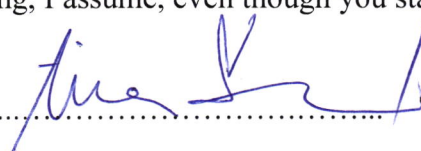
Práce splňuje základní požadavky kladené na tento typ prací, a proto ji doporučuji k ústní obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: 1. výborně

Otázky k obhajobě:

1. In your opinion stated in the thesis, the racial prejudice against Heathcliff, the main protagonist of Wuthering Heights, who is portrayed as a gypsy character, is expressed by the author herself, as you wrote in the conclusion. Is it really the personal attitude that is expressed by the author in the novel, or is it rather a form of social prejudice and a general stereotypical notion against the non-white minority and ethnic otherness?
2. Can you see any differences in the portrayals of Bertha Mason, the antagonist of Jane Eyre, and Heathcliff, the evil figure in Wuthering Heights?
3. In the context of your thesis, is there any significance of characters' names, e. g. Mr. Ablewhite in The Moonstone?
4. Do you find Jane Austen's attitude to racial otherness and British imperialism stereotypical and conventional, or rather just "superficial" as you stated in the conclusion?
5. Do you agree with Eckenrode's idea that Walter Scott "misinterpreted the Middle Ages" as you mention on p. 39? NOTE: Richard the Lionheart was not captured "in Australia" during his homecoming, I assume, even though you state it on p. 38.

Podpis oponentky diplomové práce: .....



Datum: 20. 7. 2020