

## 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 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
- II. Struktura práce: 1. Logická, jasná a přehledná
- III. Práce s literaturou: 2. Velmi dobrá práce s adekvátními prameny v patřičném rozsahu
- IV. Prezentace a interpretace dat: 1. Systematická, logická prezentace, originální a důsledná interpretace
- V. Formální stránka: 1. Odpovídá všem stanoveným požadavkům
- VI. Jazyková úroveň práce: 1. Výborná
- VII. Náročnost zpracování tématu: 2. Vysoká
- VIII. Přínosy práce: 1. Originální zpracování a názory, předkládá nová zjištění

Vyjádření vedoucího diplomové práce:

While never a central theme or issue of the nineteenth century British novel, blackness was important in English life. As Miss Benešová points out, important politicians such as Gladstone held significant and powerful influence on the speed (or delay) of manumission of colonial plantation slaves while at the same time holding financial interest in the maintenance of slavery as his father was a slave master and his inheritance was at stake. The end of slave trade 1807 and the end of slavery within Her Majesty's Empirical Dominion (1833) finally became reality under the influence of, among others, William Wilberforce, and was hotly debated, and not only in the House of Commons. Dickens and Thackeray, writing on opposite sides of the issue, published on "that peculiar institution" as Americans euphemistically called the institution of slavery at the time. Georg Eliot praised *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to the skies, stating (and I paraphrase), "If only I could write a novel with such an impact!" It is remarkable therefore, that there was no major English novel centrally focused

on slavery, given the British responsibility historically for the majority of cross-Atlantic slave trade after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and the successive investments even by the Royal Family over centuries in the slave trade.

Miss Benešová therefore accomplishes much in this mgr. thesis, and does so less at the historical level (as I have tried in outline to do above) but more in a heightened philosophical manner, citing Kant, Hume and Carlyle, among others, thereby grounding her approach to the selected novels on a wholly *intellectual* (rather than economic or historic or even political) basis – an approach which I entirely applaud.

It is also notable that when Benešová refers to „black“ people she does not restrict herself to people of African origin, enslaved or otherwise. The „Other“ portrayed in the selected English novels with darker skin may be Gypsy, Indian, Amerind, Jewish or Middle Eastern (i.e., Arab), all of whom may be well recognized as oppressed colonial subjects within the British Empire. I believe Thackeray to be the only author who is both part „black“ and born in a colony among the authors under discussion, and of course Thackeray concealed his Indian heritage closely. (It is possibly the basis for his pro-Confederacy position when war broke out in 1861.) Another English novelist possibly regarded by some as „black,“ but English-born, was the only Jewish-born British prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli, who played a big role in the emancipation efforts for both Jews and Catholics.

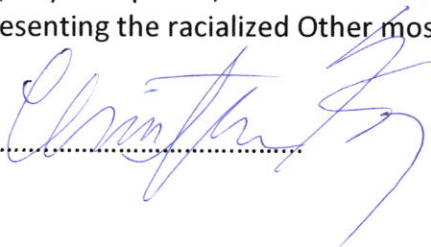
As the supervisor, I have gone over the work with Miss Benešová in its entirety, so it is to be noted that I feel she has done a thorough job while writing about what must be considered mere subplots or lesser and – from a scholarly perspective – neglected minor characters who do not really carry the plot forward in a major way. Miss Benešová distinguishes the caricature and stereotypes presented in the novels brilliantly, and I might suggest, thoroughly, for a thesis of this level, and for that reason I feel it earns 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. Why do you think that a few English novelists present so-called mulattoes (in *Sanditon*, *Vanity Fair*, *Jane Eyre* etc) as mentally or physically ill or unstable, i.e., with a medical problem?
2. Among the authors you have written about, which „black“ character is least stereotypically represented, in your opinion, and therefore the author might most be rewarded with praise for presenting the racialized Other most authentically?

Podpis vedoucího diplomové práce.....

Datum: 17. 8. 2020

\*nehodící se škrtněte