

POSUDEK BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Jméno a příjmení studenta: Tereza Matysová
Název bakalářské práce: Novels that Changed History: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Jungle*

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: PhDr. Christopher Erwin Koy, M.A., Ph.D.
Oponentka bakalářské práce: Mgr. Renata Janktová, M.A., Ph.D.

- I. Cíl práce a jeho naplnění:
- ~~1. Cíl práce byl stanoven a naplněn v souladu s tématem~~
 - ~~2. Cíl práce byl naplněn s drobnými nedostatky~~
 - ~~3. Cíl práce byl adekvátní, ale jen částečně naplněný~~
 - ~~4. Stanovený cíl nebyl naplněn~~
- II. Struktura práce:
- ~~1. Logická, jasná a přehledná~~
 - ~~2. Přiměřená~~
 - ~~3. Uspokojivá~~
 - ~~4. Nevhodná~~
- III. Práce s literaturou:
- ~~1. Výborná: zvoleny a použity vhodné prameny v patřičném rozsahu~~
 - ~~2. Velmi dobrá práce s adekvátními prameny v patřičném rozsahu~~
 - ~~3. Průměrná práce s literaturou~~
 - ~~4. Slabá, chybná nebo nedostačující~~
- IV. Formální stránka:
- ~~1. Odpovídá všem stanoveným požadavkům~~
 - ~~2. Obsahuje drobné formální chyby~~
 - ~~3. Nesplňuje některé zásadní požadavky~~
 - ~~4. Nesplňuje většinu stanovených požadavků~~
- VI. Jazyková úroveň práce:
- ~~1. Výborná~~
 - ~~2. Velmi dobrá~~
 - ~~3. Dobrá~~
 - ~~4. Podprůměrná~~
- VII. Náročnost zpracování tématu:
- ~~1. Velmi vysoká~~
 - ~~2. Vysoká~~
 - ~~3. Střední~~
 - ~~4. Nízká~~

Vyjádření oponentky bakalářské práce:

The bachelor thesis discusses two American novels, which, in the author's view, changed the world. In the opening part, both novels are set in the context of literary movements of Sentimental Realism and Naturalism, respectively, and their main characteristics in relation to these genres are explained. In Stowe's case, it is the linking of emotional appeal and Christian morality whereas in Sinclair's work, it is the use of the naturalist lens to deliver an uncompromising social critique. This section is directly followed by analyses of the respective novels that include detailed plot descriptions, analyses of the main and selected supporting characters, and an assessment of the novels' historical impacts. In the case of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Ms Matysová emphasises the immediate great popularity of the novel, which allowed it to reach wide audiences both at home and abroad. At the same time, she mentions the unfavourable reception in the pro-slavery parts of the country, but also some critical contemporary views of the novel as artificial and counterproductive. The significance of an emotion-steering imagery in combination with Christian moral appeal is aptly pointed out. In relation to *The Jungle*, Ms Matysová links Sinclair's own socialist stance and his investigative journalist's approach with the form and effect of the novel. Compared to Stowe's empathy-oriented emotional appeal, Sinclair's naturalist descriptions were designed to shock and mobilize. I think she is also right to see some passages in the latter part of the novel as too overtly propagandist. Finally, the conclusion sums up the authors' aims, methods and contributions to changes in society. While Stowe's novel helped steer the country towards the eventual abolition of slavery, Sinclair's book, albeit missing its author's declared worker-focused aim, accelerated the passing of ground-breaking food safety legislation.

The strength of this thesis are the meticulously detailed plot descriptions, which are useful for readers not familiar with the stories. Having said that, additional analyses of the authors' narrative methods and writing styles would be useful to demonstrate their creative grasp of the content and their readerly effects. The character analyses, although still mainly descriptive, are a good step in that direction.

Apart from the prevalence of description over analysis, the major weakness of the thesis is the absence of an introduction where the choice of novels, including the "world-changing" criteria behind it, would be explained. This would naturally necessitate an explication of the historical contexts – the existing circumstances which the novels sought to change and the problems they tackled. Some of them are mentioned in the historical impact sections, nevertheless, it would be good for the reader to learn at the beginning why these books were written and what makes them stand out among others to deserve the "world-changing" status.

Ms Matysová's use of primary and secondary literature to support her analyses and arguments is not as effective as it ought to be. Examples from primary texts are used to support the plot and character outlines, however, they are mostly only pasted in the text with no further comments (e.g. on page 26 with two quotations, one from the novel, and one from an introduction to the novel, unnecessarily describing the same thing). This is also the case of quotes from secondary literature (e.g. p.15, 33). There are some flaws in referencing; for example, on p. 15 a verbatim quote is presented as a paraphrase (note 14). Sometimes, a quote is presented in a confusing way (e.g. p.20, note 30). The citations also lack in consistency.

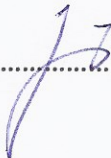
The thesis is well-structured and written in good English. There are some lapses into informal language (e.g. contractions, phrasal verbs), occasional grammar and punctuation mistakes and omissions. The detailed plot descriptions, on the other hand, demonstrate Ms Matysová's ability to produce readable, long, fluent texts. Despite its shortcomings, the thesis shows a great effort to grasp the message of these two influential novels and understand their contemporary appeal and impact.

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

Navrhovaná známka: velmi dobře

Otázky k obhajobě:

1. What do you think about the argument that there is too much sentiment in the depiction of Uncle Tom which subsequently led to a distortion of the character as reflected in the derogatory epithet of "Uncle Tom"?
2. In your opinion, why did *The Jungle* provoke action in the food safety sector but failed to lead to substantial improvements in the situation of working people, as Sinclair himself acknowledged?

Podpis oponentky bakalářské práce:.....

Datum: 15.5. 2021

*nehodící se škrtněte