



FACULTY OF ARTS  
Charles University

Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

EXAMINER'S REPORT:

Anastasiia Fediakova: "...before they turn us into something worse": A Postcolonial Reading of *The Satanic Verses* (MA thesis)

In Ms. Fediakova's MA thesis, I appreciate the decision to focus on literary qualities of Rushdie's novel, as they still tend to be overshadowed by the controversy it provoked. She employs postcolonial theories and terminology and makes good use of observations and concepts of critics such as Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, and Edward Said. The close-reading of *The Satanic Verses* is informed and insightful, the interpretations are convincing, and the overall conclusion is well-formulated. The candidate makes stimulating connections to other novels, including works as diverse and unexpected as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*.

Several aspects of the thesis, such as the analysis of eating habits or the discussion parenting issues and dysfunctional families, could be fruitfully developed into individual academic essays, and this is a strong point of the work but also one of its weaknesses – there seem to be too many ideas and topics and the overall structure does not accommodate them all.

The author writes in good style, uses rich vocabulary, and her competence in English is evident, so the small inaccuracies, minor grammatical (especially the use of articles) and formatting issues, and occasional imprecise formulations seem to be the result of time pressure, and the thesis would benefit from one more careful round of proofreading and editing.

In my view, the introduction should be more detailed in describing why and how exactly are the postcolonial theoretical frameworks and terminology going to be applied, what has been already done in this respect, etc., and the rationale strikes me as somewhat vague. For instance, the inclusion of Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* is an inventive idea, but again, a more specific explanation as to why this novel and not others would be needed. In general, a clearer articulation of the structure (of the whole work and of individual chapters, where some of the sub-divisions may seem somewhat random without further explanation) and adherence to it would be beneficial.

I would like to suggest the following questions for the discussion:

1. Could the author elaborate on the rationale – what has already been attempted in terms of postcolonial readings of *The Satanic Verses* (and Rushdie's works in general) and what gap does the thesis strive to fill?



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2. Sometimes, new ideas for structuring the work emerge only when it is too late to make substantial changes or even after the work had been submitted – would the candidate like to make any such changes, and if yes, what would they entail?

3. Does the author plan to continue her work on Rushdie and postcolonial theories, and if she does, which directions would she like to pursue?

I gladly recommend the MA thesis for defence and propose the grade B (velmi dobře), with possible upgrading depending on the viva.

Petra Johana Poncarová, PhD.

3 September 2020, Prague