



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

--Opponent's Report on Ali Daghman's Diploma Thesis:

**“Giving a Voice to the Other:
Said's Theory of Anti-Colonial Resistance”**

Mr. Ali Daghman seeks to illuminate the dynamic of resistance vis-à-vis colonial power with the critical apparatus of Edward Said's work for the candidate considers that as against that of Michel Foucault and Homi Bhaba, “Said offers a more nuanced account of the colonial experience, rejects a totalized conception of the colonial power, and retrieves a space for anti-colonial subjectivity and agency” (6). The body of the thesis contains sixty-three pages across seven chapters with an introduction and conclusion included in that figure; in addition, there is a two-page long bibliography and a ten page summary of the thesis in Czech.

As concerns the prose style, the thesis is generally well written; there are, however, a few lapses; here are a few simple examples as textual supports:

- 1) “of power operation” (7) should be instead “of a power operation” or “of power operations”
- 2) “of the agency” (8) should be “of agency”
- 3) footnote 25 shd delete ‘*the*’ from a book title...
- 4) “similarly to” (61) should be “like”
- 5) “a” is needed in “Such [a] balanced approach” (63)

The bulk of this diploma thesis, nevertheless, remains a clean read.

As regard the content effects of the piece I should adduce the following mentions from Daghman that show the line of argumentation taken and standard at which he works in the thesis: “Each chapter in this project looks at the conception of power and resistance [...] the composite whole does not generate a comprehensive view of the conception of power and resistance; but an investigation of ideas and theories, taking W.B. Yeats, a poet of resistance, and Joseph Conrad, an imperialist and anti-imperialist novelist at the same time, as case studies in this concern. This thesis aims at providing an insight into the theory of power and resistance” (10); “both authors ponder the consequences of a more abstract definition of government and the manifestation of thus defined government which range from a stabilizing, fossilizing, organizing force to the direct enemy of individualism, independence, and freedom” (4).

The candidate is now asked a series of questions:

- 1) in light of the ostensive endorsement of Said by Ali what are for the candidate the major shortcomings in Said's conception of power?
- 2) somewhat correlative to this, what are the contradictions or tensions in Said's



FACULTY OF ARTS
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures
understanding of Conrad that the candidate did not bring into relief to the extent that he thinks he might have otherwise

3) likewise, given the strong use of Said's classic essay on Yeats what never the less would the candidate submit or reject as problematic or in need of complication from Said?

Furthermore, given the question of Said's deep debt to Foucault in exploring the map of power and about whom he once called a "visionary" in thinking about power whose main function is to enrich us to think to what extent is the critique of Foucault (if not also Bhaba) vis-à-vis Said almost besides the point insofar as Said's work would be but an evolutionary stone in the cathedral of thinking the question of power in post-colonial studies? That is, Foucault was never a thinker of issues of post-colonialism, per se. What would be the contradictions or deficiencies in Said more generally for the candidate in looking at the open maw of power? This would reveal a more dialectical attitude towards a theorist so enthusiastically endorsed in the thesis.

Pre oral exam mark: výborná-

**Erik S. Roraback, D.Phil.
18 May 2010**