

Reviewer's Report on B. A. Thesis
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN JOSEPH CONRAD'S NOVELS
CHANCE, VICTORY AND THE RESCUE
by Ganna Shumyk

This is an excellent (**výborný**) Bachelor thesis. It is written with intelligence and style. It approaches the work of a classic of Anglophone literature and, by connecting with current critical trends, sheds new light on it, persuading us, first, of the seriousness of Conrad's treatment of women, and, second, by using this insight to revalue his more neglected late work. I agree with the student that *Victory* and *The Rescue* are very fine novels, and in large part this has indeed to do with the change in his treatment of female characters.

In general I agree with the student's interpretations of the stories and their characters. However, I disagree on the following points.

On p. 44, the student compares Mrs Travers with Adela of *A Passage to India*. In my view this is incorrect. Although Mrs Travers does have romantic ideas, unlike Adela, she acts with clear vision of the realities of the situation. From the first encounter between Captain Lingard and Mr Travers, it is the latter's wife who intuits exactly what is going on. Likewise I disagree with the student's characterization of Captain Lingard as being lost in a dream: if so, then it is a very realistic one, as he is able to persuade many men to fight for him, and marshal much *materiel* for his cause. I think what happens between Lingard and Mrs Travers exceeds the student's description of it.

I was also unpersuaded by the analysis of class difference in *The Rescue*: in my reading of the book, Mrs Travers does not stay with Captain Lingard because he is consumed with his failure and has lost his power.

I thought that the discussion of Victorian melodrama in the environs of p. 32 was not pertinent .

I was also sorry not to see an analysis of the Schomberg marriage. I think the wife is a crucial female character.

Some minor points:

On p. 35 the student writes: "His Chinese servant refers to him as 'Number One' which again relates Heyst to Adam..." This is stretching a point. A phrase like "Number One" is fairly regularly used to refer to a chief or boss.

"More than any other novel, *The Rescue* is rich with beautiful and powerful imagery revealing Conrad's poetic voice" (41). I think this goes too far: many of Conrad's other novels are rich in exactly such a way.

The student erroneously refers *passim* to the 'main hero' or 'main protagonist'; the adjective is superfluous (as indeed it is in Czech). Also, 'capable' or 'incapable' are used incorrectly throughout, as the student follows them with the infinitive; it should be 'of'. On p. 32 she refers to "Mr John", whereas it should be "Mr Jones".