

David Robbins, thesis director

Thesis evaluation

Iva Vejvodova

The Portrayal of the Tragic Mulatto Myth in William Faulkner's *Light in August*

This thesis examines the relation of Joe Christmas, the central character in William Faulkner's *Light in August*, to the racial/sexual hierarchical structure of Southern U.S. society and to the poisonous stereotype of the "tragic mulatto" as a cultural fiction of that white male hegemony. Ms. Vejvodova very ambitiously and insightfully examines the challenges, dangers, and opportunities of being of "indeterminate race" in a society based on racial coding, and the outcomes of her analyses are often stimulating, illuminating, and provocative of further thought.

This is a remarkable piece of analysis for a bachelor's thesis. I am deeply impressed with the willingness of Ms. Vejvodova to undertake the complex and far-reaching study that she has attempted here, and with the degree to which, given her limited experience, she was able to follow where the path led, to bring us along to where she managed to get, and even to point the way for further thought and research for herself and for us.

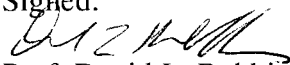
Much of the theoretical material in this bachelor's thesis could serve well, as a basis for development, in a master's thesis, and what she has accomplished is a credit to her intelligence and analytical abilities.

It is true, I think, that her reach has exceeded her grasp a little on this topic, that she might have widened the circle of the sources she used (although she makes exceptionally good use of those she employs), and that her writing occasionally (not having had benefit, as it normally would, of proof-reading by her thesis advisor) becomes overwhelmed by its aspiration. These flaws, I believe, should not take the foreground in evaluation of Ms. Vejvodova's achievement here. Her analyses of Joe Christmas as product and producer, and her far-flung expeditions from that base into the world of the apartheid American South, show us that she has learned much about and from Faulkner—and that she has developed important instincts for where else she and we need to venture to build on extant insights.

This thesis exhibits technical flaws in its apparatus and its grammar, but represents an intellectual achievement of a high order for the bachelor's-level student who has produced it. While it is not our job to grade the student, rather than the student's product, I think that it is important to see the great promise already embodied in this product, at least as much as to see its admitted imperfections.

Thesis evaluation: between "1, vyborne" and "2, velmi dobre"

Signed:



Prof. David L. Robbins, Ph.D.

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If the reader has any questions or needs additional information, please contact me at drobbins@suffolk.edu.