

**Undergraduate Thesis Assessment Rubric**  
 Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia

Thesis Author: **Dušan Vokrouhlik**  
 Title: *Stereotypical images of English people*  
 Length: 34 pages  
 Text Length: 30 pages

| <i>Assessment Criteria</i>   | <i>Scale</i>   | <i>Comments</i> |
|--|--|-----------------|
| 1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the examined issue. It presents and overview of the thesis.   | Outstanding<br>Very good<br>Acceptable<br>Somewhat deficient<br>Very deficient |                 |
| 2. The thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter through the background/review of literature. The author presents information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources are included (if appropriate). | Outstanding<br>Very good<br>Acceptable<br>Somewhat deficient<br>Very deficient |                 |
| 3. The author carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. Ideas are richly supported with accurate details that develop the main point. The author's voice is evident.  | Outstanding<br>Very good<br>Acceptable<br>Somewhat deficient<br>Very deficient |                 |
| 4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.  | Outstanding<br>Very good<br>Acceptable<br>Somewhat deficient<br>Very deficient |                 |
| 5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.  | Outstanding<br>Very good<br>Acceptable<br>Somewhat deficient<br>Very deficient |                 |
| 6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The author uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation.  | Outstanding<br>Very good<br>Acceptable<br>Somewhat deficient<br>Very deficient |                 |
| 7. The language use is precise. The student makes proficient use of language in a way that is appropriate for the discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing.   | Outstanding<br>Very good<br>Acceptable<br>Somewhat deficient<br>Very deficient |                 |
| 8. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided.  | Outstanding<br>Very good<br>Acceptable<br>Somewhat deficient<br>Very deficient |                 |

## Final Comments & Questions

The work as a whole is logically constructed: the author begins with a general description of stereotypes, following by an explanation of the difference between the terms "English" and "British", though it is curious how pervasive the tendency can be to conflate these two terms. The author is right to emphasise the distinction between them; however, on pp. 16-17, in a thesis focusing on Englishness, he cites a YouGov survey which refers to *British individuals* and *the British population* as a whole; then on p. 21 we read *Debrett's (2021) agrees with Fox and claims the stiff upper lip is deeply rooted in the British mentality.*

The concept of the stiff upper lip is one of three character traits traditionally associated with English people, the other two being politeness and fair play. As regards the last mentioned, the author notes a change in standards which has occurred over the past half century or more, particularly with reference to sport, and on p. 21 poses the question: *So why did English sport become associated with hooliganism rather than the principles of fair play?* To some extent, though, he has already answered his own question in the preceding paragraphs on pp. 19-21, describing the difference in mentality in the era of amateurism, compared with the gradual change to a world of professional sport, as a result of which sporting encounters became much more confrontational. On the other hand, this cannot be the whole story, as might be shown using the case of Douglas Jardine, whose name appears on p. 19. Jardine was from the English upper middle-class; he attended a private school, graduated from Oxford University and in 1932, at the age of 32, captained the England cricket team on a tour to Australia, England's strongest opponents. It is worth noting here that Jardine was a banker by profession and played cricket as an amateur, so financial gain was not a motivating factor in his sporting career. In Australia, Jardine instructed his bowlers to deliver the ball fast and bouncing high directly at the batsmen's body in order to intimidate them and force them to prioritise defending their own body above trying to score runs. The strategy proved highly effective and, technically, there was nothing illegal about it; however, many observers considered it unsporting, completely against the spirit of the game and as the saying goes "just not cricket". The point is that a decline in standards of sportsmanship and concepts of "fair play" cannot be attributed solely to the aggressive behaviour of young working-class men.

Moving on to the practical section of the work: the idea of conducting a questionnaire amongst native English people was good, its execution rather less so. The author states that the questionnaire contained twelve questions but he should have included a copy of these in an appendix. The results to five questions (unnumbered) are accompanied with either graphs or pie charts, so presumably (some) other questions related to respondents' profiles mentioned in the opening paragraph. Here, however, there are only four discernible items: age group, gender, level of education and region of residence. So what were the remaining three questions? One also has to wonder what the point was of collecting all this background information when no discussion follows of any similarities or differences between the sub-groups. This represents a missed opportunity to detect whether certain responses are more likely to be associated with a particular profile. It would be useful if further enlightenment in this area could be provided at the oral defence.

The Conclusion is disappointingly brief, albeit not entirely devoid of dramatic impact with the somewhat forlorn pronouncement of the final few words: *... thus making any attempts at constructing a unified national character redundant.* It may well be that this parting shot is a result of the author's frustration with his own topic; on the other hand, there may be sound grounds for the assertion based on the views of Orwell and Čapek as cited on p. 23 of the work. So the last question would be: is there any point at all in studying stereotypes and questions of national identity?

Recommended grade: **dobře**, with the possibility of upgrading to **velmi dobře** based on the quality of the oral defence

Supervisor: Andrew Tollet

Date: 28th August 2023

Signature: