Reviewer’s recommendation for overall mark: B

1. Evaluation of central idea, thesis, focus and purpose: B
2. Evaluation of organization, logic and arrangement: B
3. Evaluation of topic development, support and evidence: A
4. Evaluation of language, style, standard usage, citation and bibliographic standards: B

Comments and/or topics and questions for the thesis defence: Aleš Kozel’s thesis examines two of Thomas Hardy’s novels, Tess of the D’Urbevilles and Jude the Obscure, in the light of John Stuart Mill’s philosophy’s influence on Hardy’s intellectual development and literary treatment of his characters. The thesis sustains a solid argument, backed by a comprehensive discussion of the period views on education and class system as determining factors of one’s position and prospects of advancement in life, as well as on sources of morality. While I understand this discussion is to favour the central argument, I missed a more pronounced critical engagement with Mill’s vision or an indication of where Hardy diverged from Mill’s attitudes and perhaps even encoded a critique of certain aspects of his philosophy (or am I wrong in assuming that Hardy wasn’t the one to blindly follow someone’s theories – perhaps this can be clarified during the discussion?). In this sense, for me the thesis didn’t quite manage to go beyond the obvious, although it needs to be stressed that there is nothing wrong with how it presents the topic. While it is generally well-written, at times the thesis presents clumsy phrasing, mistyping and misspellings, alongside a number of small but consistent mistakes in references (esp. in cases of one source being quoted by another source, e.g. 13, 14; occasionally a source missing in the bibliography, e.g. Morgen, p. 13). While I don’t think form should be privileged over content, from an excellent thesis I’d expect a more attentive work with matters of academic writing. Hence the general mark of very good.